

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI[®]

A

RESISTING THE ALLEGORY: WRITING THE SELF
IN THE NOVELS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË
by
ROCHELLE SULLIVAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2001

UMI Number: 3008875

Copyright 2001 by
Sullivan, Rochelle

All rights reserved.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3008875

Copyright 2001 by Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© 2001

ROCHELLE SULLIVAN

All rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4/27/2001

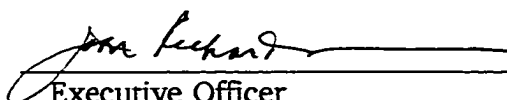
Date



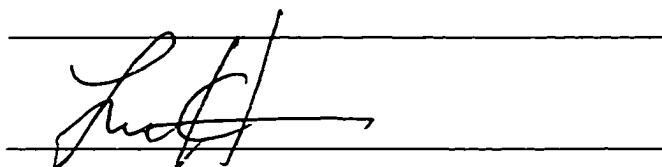
Chair of Examining Committee

4.30/01

Date



Executive Officer



Donald Stone

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

RESISTING THE ALLEGORY: WRITING THE SELF
IN THE NOVELS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTE

by

Rochelle Sullivan

Advisor: Professor Felicia Bonaparte

Contrary to the bias against allegory throughout most of this century, I claim in this study that Charlotte Bronte's novels are allegorical, that the realism we have assumed to be their primary purpose and through which we have interpreted their narratives is but the surface of the texts. And as allegory is a more malleable and inclusive form than its "mechanic" structure suggests, Bronte utilizes and transforms traditional allegorical kinds for her own secular purposes, recreating the battle form between God and the devil (Prudentius), factual and verbal allegory (Bede), and the religious and moral quest for salvation (Bunyan), with the intention of addressing the religious, moral, philosophical, political and social issues of her time. More immediately, I argue that Bronte's novels are informed by Edward Bulwer Lytton's declaration in *Caxtoniana* that the form "characteristic" of his century was designed in its literal narrative to satisfy "popular interest in character and incident," while carrying a "moral allegory" in its "interior symbolical signification." By "moral," Bulwer does not mean that

narrow category concerned with right and wrong alone, but rather that conceptual realm Victorians called the ideal, referring not only to the idea of perfection but, in a Platonic and Kantian manner, to any conceptual frame that could give shape to empirical data. Important also to my reading are Angus Fletcher's study of the grammar of allegory, including in its purview "a variety of literary [and figurative] kinds," Paul de Man's embrace of allegorical duality as a reflection of the temporality and discontinuity of human existence, and Felicia Bonaparte's claim that the idiom of Victorian fiction is poetic, not mimetic. Fletcher's examination of satire, irony, surrealism, battle, ritual, projection, and obsession as elements of allegory, de Man's claim for its "existential authenticity," and Bonaparte's mythopoeic study of the Victorian novel have influenced my claim that Bronte uses allegorical means to examine the past, test the present, and recreate the future. To that end she deconstructs the self, personifies and interrogates its fragmented elements, and ultimately creates a coherent identity in the form of a written text.

To
Felicia Bonaparte,
My teacher, my inspiration, and my friend
And
Lawrence Sullivan,
For the gift of freedom

CONTENTS

	Introduction	1
Chapter 1	<i>Villette</i> : Writing the Self	16
Chapter 2	The Allegory of Power in <i>The Professor</i>	65
Chapter 3	Jane Eyre as Secular Prophet	119
Chapter 4	Similarity and Difference in <i>Shirley</i>	185
	Notes	234
	Selected Bibliography	242

Introduction

In her soon to be published study, *The Aesthetics of Poesis: The Making of Victorian Fiction*, Felicia Bonaparte will show that, contrary to the popular notion which has prevailed through most of this century, the idiom of Victorian fiction is not mimetic but poetic. The realism we have assumed to be the primary purpose of this fiction, and through which we have generally sought to interpret its narratives, is but the surface of the text. It serves the vital function of conveying the social, historical, psychological, economic, political, and other observations of empirical reality crucial to Victorian thought, but it is only the smaller part of what Edward Bulwer-Lytton, describing what he took to be the form “characteristic” of his century, called the novel of the double plot. This is a novel, Bulwer declares, designed in its literal narrative to satisfy “popular interest in character and incident,” while carrying a “moral allegory” in its “interior symbolical signification” (319). And by “moral,” as Bonaparte shows, Bulwer does not mean that narrow category concerned with right and wrong alone, but in the broader Victorian sense, rather that conceptual realm Victorians often called the ideal, a term by which they referred not only to the idea of perfection but, in a Platonic and Kantian manner, to any conceptual frame that could give shape to empirical data. This is the view of art developed in *Middlemarch*, a novel in which Adolf Naumann, the primary figure of the artist, speaks of attempting to embody “the idealistic in the real.” It is the relationship between these two, the idealistic and the real, that makes the totality of the novel. (Bonaparte, “*Middlemarch*”

107-54) The reader, therefore, cannot ask questions of Victorian fiction that pertain exclusively to verisimilitude, for it is only in the complex relationship between the real narrative and its allegorical frame that the characters, setting, plot, language, and meaning of a novel can be discerned and fully understood.¹ With these ideas as my point of departure, I claim in this study that Charlotte Brontë uses allegorical means to examine received truths and ideal forms, to test their meaning and power in the context of a single modern² consciousness, and to preserve what she considers essential while allowing the temporal to fall away. To that end she deconstructs the self, personifies and interrogates its fragmented elements, and ultimately creates a coherent identity in the form of a written text.

Viewing Brontë's allegorical process in this way provides the novels an aesthetic coherence and intellectual dimension overlooked by readers who focus primarily on their psychoanalytic, socio- or historico-political meaning, as the bulk of Brontë's readers do. For example, many critics mining for psychoanalytical truths, interpret the works as realizations of repressed fantasy and wish-fulfillment. Meredith Ann Skura, for one, sees oedipal fantasy emanating from the narrator's unconscious (93), and Janice Carlisle, a "carapace of defense against the almost intolerable pain of memory" (265) in *Jane Eyre*. In its mode of projection, Mary Jacobus sees an example of the Lacanian "Mirror Phase" in *Villette*: the narrator as the "absent center," she says, 'unconsciously' exerts a centripetal force on the other characters, making them all facets of the consciousness whose passions animate them" (51). This conception begins to sound like allegorical projection, but for the fact that this and all psychoanalytic

readings, by their very nature, consider the narrative a defensive or unconscious projection rather than a conscious exploration and manipulation of abstract ideas by the narrator making her “moral” and imaginative life, and by the author writing the allegorical novel.

Many readers do not seek beyond the sociological and political experience of the female characters in Brontë’s novels. As thorough and perceptive as some of these readings are, their perspectives and conclusions are based primarily on the literal narrative. For example, Margaret Homans categorizes *Jane Eyre* as a gothic novel, but one which “protests [and subverts] the objectification of the feminine that the gothic enacts” (86); Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar translate the moral allegories in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* into “distinctively female stor[ies] of enclosure and escape” (32), and attribute the subversive tendencies of women’s writing in the nineteenth century to “patriarchal literary standards” (73); and Elaine Showalter makes the point that in *Jane Eyre* Brontë constructs “a complete female consciousness” out of a “pattern of allusion” reflecting the heroine’s psychological and psychosexual development (112-13). While these interpretations make important contributions to our understanding of the psychological complexity and social and political status of Brontë’s heroines, they do not take into account what I consider the more inclusive epistemological and moral vision located in the allegorical narrative.

Nor is that vision addressed in Terry Eagleton’s Marxist analysis of Charlotte Brontë’s novels. He posits an “ideological structure” based on class

“roles, values, and relations,” using these categories to reconcile history, ideology, and Brontë’s fiction (4), while, with the intention of examining the novels as mythopoeic texts, I look at these same categories as elements in a symbolic history which reconciles the fiction, myth, literary tradition, and the crisis of identity in Brontë’s world.

Finally, that same intention also precludes postmodernist conceptions of texts as decentered and discontinuous. The argument against logocentrism, coherence, and the presence of consciousness in any work is entirely antithetical to my view of Brontë’s work as a consciously made and unified allegorical construct.

Allegory is, of course, an extremely complex concept, but it is not my purpose to define it in the abstract or to lay theoretic foundations for one view of it or another. Rather I focus on Brontë herself and on her understanding of allegory. Like most Victorians on most questions she approaches allegory from an eclectic point of view, blending and reshaping traditional definitions to accommodate them to her vision and her time. And while there is no apparent evidence that Brontë read the influential classical or medieval allegorists, the transmittal of their ideas through Bunyan, whom she did read, would nevertheless have affected her knowledge of allegory. The evolution of his ideas rather than direct contact with the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius, for example, would account for the claim that Brontë uses the battle structure between God and the Devil in and for the human soul, but for her own secular purposes. Rigidly personified figures still embody and dramatize the abstract ideas impelling her novels, but

these are rounded into a more flexible and realistically developed form, yielding a more realistic substance. The *Psychomachia* is the paradigm, and the most narrowly constrained, didactic example of allegory, and while it is true that in his later incarnation of the form Bunyan aims at the same didacticism for many of the same reasons, he is able, nevertheless, to develop in his own work a higher degree of psychological detail, narrative drama, and chronological extension. Bunyan is very important to Brontë. As Barry Qualls and others have shown, the *Pilgrim's Progress* is the single most important source from which Brontë draws in her novels. Her own statement in the preface to *The Professor*, along with the allusions and quest structure in this and in her other novels, leaves no doubt that Bunyan's tale is uppermost in her mind as she formulates her narratives.

The Venerable Bede may or may not be a conscious source of Brontë's allegorical thinking either, but, as another influential figure in the history of allegory, the distinction he makes between factual and verbal allegory also plays a considerable part in her use of the form. The first type interprets the New Testament as the allegorical fulfillment of particular "situations"³ in the Old Testament which are construed typologically; the second, however, and the one more germane to Brontë's allegorical practices, is a rhetorical device using figurative language to convey prophetic meaning.

Yet even closer to Brontë's conception of allegory is the "psychic" or mythic allegory described by Dante in *Convivio* (c. 1306). The narrative of such allegory is far more fluid and developed than allegories of earlier kinds. In addition,

whereas Bede's allegory operates at a one-to-one level of identification between the sign and what it signifies, Dante's elaborates the sign into a narrative structured according to his four formal categories: the literal, the allegorical, the moral, and the anagogic. Edwin Honig deduces from Dante's letter to Can Grande della Scala on the interpretation of the *Divina Commedia*, that these categories reach beyond the narrow confines of doctrinal truth, and what he says about Dante's allegory, I claim for Brontë's allegorical novels as well: they are "a form of narrative fiction" expressing a "distinct anagogical purpose, which the form and tropes fulfill" (4). Allegory is a word that frequently crops up in the nineteenth century, although there are certainly Victorians who express an aversion to it. One of those is Thomas Babington Macaulay, who in his *Critical and Historical Essays*, dismisses allegory as an overly abstract, fanciful form. He appreciates *Pilgrim's Progress* because it is inconsistent and lapses out of allegory into concrete and human narrative, but he finds Spenser's *Faerie Queene* didactic and utterly boring: "We become sick of cardinal virtues, and deadly sins," he writes, "and long for the society of plain men and women" (401).

Such views are only to be expected from Macaulay, a hard empiricist, wedded to the material world and to concrete reality. The world exists. It does not mean. Similarly, the fictional narrative, for him, should signify only itself. But this, the empiricist point of view -- fast becoming the dominant paradigm in the wake of the crisis of faith,⁴ and bringing with it the skepticism inherent in the philosophy -- was the very idea of reality many Victorians sought to counter,

many through allegorical means, which could reclaim at least the notion of a transcendent, ideal world, if only in fictional form. Precisely because, for most Victorians, the term and the form are no longer the property of theological belief but of literary practice, it would be impossible to suggest a single definition of allegory for the entire nineteenth century. To do so, indeed, would be to mask the extraordinary variety of uses to which the device was put in nineteenth century narrative. Nor is it always possible in the writings of the Victorians to distinguish allegory from its very close kin, symbolism. For some Victorians the two are distinct. For example, as Bonaparte suggests in her study of *Romola*, George Eliot makes clear and important distinctions between the symbolic and the allegorical. It was not Eliot's intention, Bonaparte tells us, to create a parallel narrative describing another world; "it was the literal narrative that was the metaphor, and the metaphor that was the thing itself, the center through which the literal narrative could be rightly understood" (33). But Bulwer Lytton – for instance, above – uses the terms almost interchangeably. So does Matthew Arnold with his objection to the modern view of poetry as "true allegory of the state of one's own mind in a representative history"⁵ (Preface to *Empedocles on Etna*). And, so, too, does Dickens in *David Copperfield*, when Aunt Betsey explains to David the nature of Mr. Dick's curious mind. This scene is a virtual definition of how Dickens thinks of allegory:

Did he say anything to you about King Charles the First child?

[. . .] That's his allegorical way of expressing it. He connects his

illness with great disturbance and agitation, naturally, and that's the figure, or the simile, or whatever it's called, which he chooses to use.

And why shouldn't he, if he thinks proper! (260; ch. 14)

This question concerning the relationship between the symbolic and the allegorical continues into the twentieth century, a time in which allegory has not dwindled in the least despite the fact that empiricism -- even more totally our paradigm -- has radically curtailed the realm to which allegorical narrative can be taken to refer. In his study of allegory as a symbolic mode, for instance, Angus Fletcher expands the definition of the term by considering allegory in the context of symbolism and ritual, the latter term, according to Fletcher, established in the criticism of Kenneth Burke for "symbolic action" (20). Paul de Man argues against the positioning of symbol at the top and allegory at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder. Making the point that temporality and discontinuity are the inescapable conditions of human existence, de Man associates the notion of symbolic unity with "romantic delusion" and allegorical duality with "existential authenticity" (Krieger 14). His reference to the disjunction between language and reality as evidence of that "authenticity" is part of a larger discussion by poststructuralist critics who find the "difference" in the play of linguistic meaning and the absence between signifier and signified consistent with the properties of allegorical structure.⁶

As a Victorian who is steeped in her Romantic heritage, as Helene Moglen and others have shown, Brontë would disagree emphatically with de Man's invalidation of symbolic unity, and while she does use allegorical traditions as a

literary device, she is by no means making a substantive commitment to an allegorical view of the universe, as a medieval allegorist would. On the contrary, Brontë uses allegory to resist duality. And by duality I mean the strict separation of the real and ideal, or, as they would have said in the Middle Ages, the separation of heaven and earth. Her ultimate goal is to create a unified symbol, and the purpose of that symbol is to carry the rhetorical rather than the substantive meaning of traditional allegories. She looks to myth, history and literature to create, as Spenser does in the *Faerie Queene*, a symbolic “testament,” as Honig describes Spenser’s enterprise, “of Christian ideals rooted in the real struggles of the individual consciousness” (96). Brontë, like Spenser, is thinking of allegory as a literary device, a device to be used for deconstructing and constructing other allegories, and one through which the individual characters can be reconstituted from “the national, classical, and Biblical lore, out of which the allegory grows” (Honig 96).

It is unfortunately the case that we do not find in Brontë’s novels, as we do in *David Copperfield*, any clear definition of allegory or reference to the term itself. This may be so because Brontë’s narrative mode is one of concealment, her narrative intention to compel her sophisticated audience, in the act of reading, to critically excavate the literal facts in the same way that she excavates reality. This is borne out by Lucy’s own admission: “There is a perverse mood of the mind which is rather soothed than irritated by misconstruction; and in quarters where we can never be rightly known, we take pleasure, I think, in being consummately

ignored" (164; ch. 18); and again by the reason she gives for concealing her identity from Dr. John:

To say anything on the subject [. . .] had not suited my habits of thought, or assimilated with my system of feeling. On the contrary, I had preferred to keep the matter to myself. I liked entering his presence covered with a cloud he had not seen through, while he stood before me under a ray of special illumination, which shone all partial over his head, trembled about his feet, and cast no light no farther. (248; ch. 16)

Brontë does, however, suggest some things and say other things that allow us to penetrate her allegorical practices. The symbolic characterizations, the narrative structure of a pilgrimage or quest, the personified figures, battle tropes, and figurative language signal the ambivalence and the doubleness of allegorical meaning, and then subtly point to the sources of that meaning by alluding to a specific genre or myth, or analyzing an abstract idea. Most pertinent to the structural and epistemological progression of her novels is the distinction that Coleridge makes between allegory as "mechanic" and symbol as "organic" form. It is just because allegory is a predetermined and mechanical form that she makes it an instrument for deconstructing, probing, questioning, and evaluating each aspect of what superficially appears to be a unified whole. In a seemingly paradoxical process, she uses allegory to resist allegory, and ultimately to create, in Coleridgean terms, a revitalized and unified symbolic life. With that purpose she enters into a dialogue with her own century and with the past, piercing the

surface of realism to reveal the abstract ideas at its core. She targets conventions of religion, culture, and class which have lost connection to their origin and reason for being, yet retain the capacity to eclipse the self. She appraises and reshapes myth and tradition, belief and knowing, genre, symbol, and language, restoring their power to speak to contemporary philosophical and spiritual concerns, and to inform the individual imagination. She attempts to reconcile the duality of the real and ideal by making her characters distinct personalities with the power to reflect and change, while simultaneously encoding in them the double meaning of allegorical form.

As I claim in the title of this thesis, Brontë's allegories are allegories of the self. Many readers take her narratives as literal autobiographies, which to some extent they are, but I want to argue that they are also, and far more importantly, autobiographies in a metaphysical sense. And on such autobiographical enterprises, Walter Benjamin inadvertently sheds some light when he speaks of the allegorical process in history. He argues that allegory is the form rising out of ruin and loss, the allegorical figure pointing to the disjunction and creating the chronological movement between what was, what is absent, and what can never be regained. A perfect example of the allegorical figure described by Benjamin is to be found in *Bleak House*. The iconographic image of a Roman painted on the ceiling of Mr. Tulkinghorn's chamber is, as Dickens describes him, the "very body and soul of Allegory" and the incarnation of historical loss. The Roman points down at "two candles that were blown out suddenly, soon after being lighted" -- the illumination of Roman enlightenment -- at an "empty chair" -- where great

and powerful historical figures sat -- and at "a stain upon the ground before it" -- the residue left by the corpse of Mr. Tulkinghorn and the past.

So it shall happen surely, through many years to come, that ghostly stories shall be told of the stain upon the floor, so easy to be covered, so hard to be got out; and that the Roman, pointing from the ceiling, shall point, so long as dust and damp and spiders spare him, with far greater significance than he ever had in Mr. Tulkinghorn's time, and with a deadly meaning. For, Mr. Tulkinghorn's time is over for evermore; and the Roman pointed at the murderous hand uplifted against his life, and pointed helplessly at him, from night to morning lying face downward on the floor, shot through the heart. (585; ch. XLVIII)

The loss of history and the accompanying sense of alienation that Benjamin and Dickens speak of was strong in the nineteenth century, and many Victorian writers, including Arnold, Carlyle, and Bulwer-Lytton responded to the loss of certainty by assigning to the poet the task of epistemologically, spiritually, and socially reconceiving the world.⁷ In her autobiographical novels, Brontë conceives of a single life as a microcosmic recreation of the world. The self is the point of connection. Just as autobiography makes a self, and often through the making of a text, as *David Copperfield* makes his self through the writing of his autobiography, so, too, does Brontë's allegory, which attempts to construct, from the shards of a fragmented psyche, an autonomous, renovated, and fully unified being. She thinks as Arnold does in his "Memorial" to the poets of history (1852),

answering through her art Arnold's vision and his call: "the end is everywhere,/ Art still has truth, take refuge there."

Thus, in terms of the aesthetic process itself, she represents herself as Carlyle, more than a decade earlier, and Virginia Woolf, in the next century, represent the biographer, not as a "chronicler" but an "artist" who selects defining memories from daily experience, recasts them in the context of literary and religious tradition, and creates, for an empirical era, a symbolically coherent and renovated form of sacred life. Woolf's conception of *Orlando* as a biography informed by literary symbols stems from Carlyle's observation in *Sartor Resartus* that "it is in and through symbols that man, consciously or unconsciously, lives, works, and has his being" (168). He points to the symbolic nature of language itself, and explores the possibility of creating in the autobiographical work a secular scripture -- or allegory -- which, as Barry Qualls states Carlyle's purpose, "will make the reader recognize the unseen other which those symbols -- our every day language -- [suggest]" (18).

Some might say, some do say, that Brontë does not succeed in creating unity through symbol and myth. For them, such an attempt is impossible and therefore bound to end in failure. If, however, as I believe, she writes the failure as well as the attempt into her narratives, then the novels themselves hold the answer to the charge commonly made by critics that they are evasive, inconclusive, inauthentic. The novels show that what is perceived as failure because it is uncertain, secret, or unreal, becomes in Brontë's allegorical universe

the ineffable mystery that can be reconciled with, but not contained or rationalized by, empirical thought. “Reason” may speak and warn against the flight of fancy, but the “Imagination,” “a spirit, softer and better than Human Reason,” a “greater glory,” holds sway in Brontë’s visionary landscape. “In that divine, compassionate, succourable influence” she locates her immortality, and to that deity she offers her obeisance: “thou hadst for endurance, thy great army of martyrs; for achievement, thy chosen band of worthies. Deity unquestioned, thine essence foils decay” (*Villette* 307- 309; ch. 21). The tension between “Reason” and “Imagination” that Lucy Snowe suffers and Brontë explicates in *Villette* is the allegorical battle informing all of Brontë’s novels. In the space between we are left with opposing partners, but with a body of work that mediates and narrows the duality they create.

Each of Brontë’s novels mediates that duality in a different form. In *Villette*, I examine the difference between ideal forms and their trivialization in the modern world. Although *Villette* is Brontë’s last novel, I make it the subject of Chapter One because it is, in my judgment, the culmination of Brontë’s thinking and artistic command. Of all of her novels, its allegory is the most sharply delineated, the most comprehensive and fully sustained. In each of the following chapters, I focus on the abstract idea at the core of the realistic narrative and the juxtapositions that it creates. In Chapter Two on *The Professor*, I consider the allegorization of power in the context of cultural and economic hierarchies in Victorian times. In Chapter Three, I view the narrator in *Jane Eyre* as a prophetic

figure, a truth teller, who “pluck[s] the mask from the face of the Pharisee” (35). And in Chapter Four on *Shirley*, Brontë’s only realistic novel, I take up the idea of “difference,” not linguistically but formally, thematically, and philosophically. It is my hope that through this approach Charlotte Brontë will emerge as a writer of large intellect and imagination, one who, as Arnold advises, steeps herself in tradition so that she may read present signs, and through her understanding, envision the future.

Chapter 2: *Villette*: Writing the Self

In *Villette*, Charlotte Brontë explores the self as a creation of personal myth, forged not out of the daily self but out of the living being that Yeats, in his 1922 autobiography, identifies as the “age-long memoried self.” She conceives the narrator, Lucy Snowe, as a fictional autobiographer, an allegorist, and an exemplar of Shelley’s definition of the poet, striving to “create anew the universe” in the form of a single aesthetically, philosophically, and spiritually integrated life. With that purpose, and in each of her formal modes, Lucy inquires into conventions of genre, religion, and culture represented in her narrative by character, place, and language, considering each in the context of its ideal form and meaning, as it has been trivialized, and as a symbol of her own conflicted desires and quest for coherence. She examines the linguistic structures of romance and tragedy, the kinetic language of performance, and the iconography of painting in the light of changing values. She employs rhetorical devices to further encode and layer the text, and to signal that her “heretic narrative” and “creed” should be read exegetically as well as literally. Writing her vision “plain,” as she says, “so she who ran might read” (147; ch. 9), she evokes with these words two sources to indicate her intention: the last line of a biblical passage --

And the Lord answered me,
and said, Write the vision, and
make it plain upon tables, that
he may run that readeth it. (Habakkuk 2.2)

-- and a more immediate source, *Tirocinium* by William Cowper, whose vision, revealed in some detail in *Shirley*, is important to Brontë and most likely influenced her own. In summoning up these passages, Brontë as author and Lucy as narrator implicitly call on the reader to penetrate the realistic narrative in order, as Cowper instructs, to glean those

truths, on which depends our main concern [. . .]

[which] Shine by the side of every path we tread

With such a lustre, he that runs may read. (I. 11. 75-7)

An estranged and repressed figure, Lucy Snowe's character embodies the loss of that "main concern," the loss of tradition and context, of the buried memory of sacred history, and in general the sense of existential homelessness shaping the spirit and the culture of the Victorian age. In the first chapter of her autobiography, she writes herself as an empty vessel: her past a mystery, a voiceless shadow in the present, she seems hardly to exist. Her narrative task is to explore her "own thoughts" in her "own still shadow world" (13; ch. 85), and, as the name "Lucy" suggests, to move from the shadow into the light by filling that empty vessel with form and meaning. For that reason, she assumes the role of allegorist, making each significant character in the narrative an aspect of her mind, whether a projected wish, a personified philosophical ideal, a mythical archetype, or a literary type. In the second chapter, she emerges out of the shadow, announcing her identity -- "I, Lucy Snowe" (69; ch. 2) -- and coming to life, but barely so and only in relation to a specific other, to Polly Home, the

character she identifies later in the novel as her double.

The two do not resemble each other in any physical way but one; they are diminutive in stature and frame, but Polly is considered beautiful and Lucy plain. They do, however, mirror each other in several other ways important to the novel. In the opening chapters, the fourteen year-old Lucy and the six year-old Polly are living as outsiders, exiled from their families, from the center of the Bretton home, and in Polly's case at this time, from country as well, although when Lucy becomes a young woman, she will also leave her native country for Belgium and experience an estrangement similar to Polly's. Both are passive, alienated, and scarcely alive: Lucy, silent and invisible; Polly, homesick and stricken by an obsession to merge with her father, Mr. Home -- "her mind had been filled from his, as the cup from the flagon" (71; ch. 2) -- and with her childhood idol, the sixteen year-old John Graham Bretton".⁸

One would have thought the child had no mind or life of her own, but must necessarily live, move, and have her being in another: now that her father was taken from her, she nestled to Graham, and seemed to feel by his feelings: to exist in his existence. (83; ch. 3)

In fact, Polly exemplifies Fletcher's conception of the allegorical agent as a figure "possessed by an [unearthly] daemon" in the form of a single obsessional idea. (39) Her supernatural status is emphasized by Graham, who perceives her as a "creature" and a "changeling" (85; ch. 3), while as Lucy perceives her, she is "cursed" by a "one-idead nature betraying [a] monomaniac tendency" (69; ch. 2).

According to Fletcher, the daemonic or allegorical agent seems “not [to] control his own destiny,” but appears either to be “driven by some hidden private force” (40) or “to be controlled by some foreign force, something outside the sphere of his own ego” (41). Suggesting as much in a language resonating with connotation, Lucy Snowe tacitly indicates that she too is “possessed,” and that while the “force” controlling Polly is her obsessional love for John and her father, the “force” controlling Lucy is her own idea of Polly:

I Lucy Snowe, plead guiltless of that curse, an overheated and discursive imagination; but whenever opening a room-door, I found her seated in a corner alone, her head in her pigmy hand, that room seemed to me not inhabited but haunted. (69; ch. 2)

Here Lucy intimates that she is actually guilty of “an overheated and discursive imagination” by emphatically claiming the opposite, a rhetorical device she uses throughout the novel to suggest that essential truth may be hidden by material fact. Having to “plead,” and using the negative adjective “guiltless,” rather than a positive term to describe what she claims to be a clear, rational, and concrete vision, suggests, in fact, that Lucy’s statement is meant to reveal its opposite. The independent clause asserting her innocence belongs to what Northrope Frye terms the “displaced narrative,” while the subordinate clause implies the “undisplaced” truth that the “daemon” or idea of Polly haunts and inhabits the room of Lucy’s imagination. Opening the door into that room, she discloses, at the start, the terms, as Fletcher describes them, of her allegorical narrative. Later in the novel, when the adult Lucy finds herself in the Bretton’s

Belgian home, she will wonder “why did [the town of] Bretton and my fourteenth year haunt me thus?” (241; ch. 16). One reason is that she invests the six year-old Polly with supernatural power, envisioning her as some “precocious fanatic or untimely saint,” as one “growing old and unearthly” (69; ch. 2). She implies that she and Polly are connected because they share an unstable and rarefied state of being, and that Polly substantiates Lucy’s spiritual struggle: “I scarcely know what thoughts I had; but they ran risk of being hardly more rational and healthy than that child’s mind must have been” (69; ch. 2).

As Lucy speaks of her, Polly seems hardly human at all: but an object – “it turned and fixed its eyes” (64; ch. 1) – a “mere doll,” picked up, put down, placed in position; or in anticipation of Papa’s arrival, “a creature” (85; ch. 3), “a bird or a shaft or any other swift thing” (70; ch. 2); or seated at his elbow, a tame bird “perched on a high chair” (73; ch. 2). During this period, especially, Polly is estranged from Graham’s mother – “she never showed [Mrs. Bretton] one glimpse of her inner self”; ignored by [Mrs. Bretton], for whom “she was nothing but a docile somewhat quaint little maiden” (90; ch. 2); and although she worships Graham and her father, Mr. Home, held at arms length and misunderstood by them as well. Graham treats her carelessly, without consideration of her feeling, and she, of course, cannot comprehend him because, as Lucy points out, “he is a boy and you are a girl; he is sixteen and you are only six; his nature is strong and gay, and yours is otherwise” (91; ch. 2). And, in spite of his intense feeling for her, Mr. Home does not recognize Polly’s autonomy either. He objectifies her by referring to her in the third person, and, in speaking to him, she objectifies herself

by doing the same:

Polly would be sorry to give papa pain; would she not?

[. . .] Then Polly must be cheerful: not cry at parting; not fret afterwards. She must look forward to meeting again, and try to be happy meanwhile.

Can she do this?

She will try.

I see she will. (79; ch. 2)

This dialogue ends, however, with Polly's poignant cry -- "Papa!"-- a cry that Lucy herself cannot utter at this point in the novel, in spite of her isolation, but knows well and translates into the mythic language of universal loss: "It was low and long; a sort of 'why hast thou forsaken me?'" (79; ch. 2)

Polly joins Lucy in circumscribing their relationship. She reveals herself only to Lucy -- "she lavishes her eccentricities regardlessly before me" -- although, as Lucy says, not because Polly feels affection for her, but rather because she makes Lucy an extension of herself: "my society had soon become to her a sort of unconscious necessary" (382; ch. 26). For her part, Lucy will insist later in the novel, when they are both adults, that "if any one knew me it was little Paulina Mary"⁹ (386; ch. 26), and will wonder, as she says, "to find my thoughts hers: there are certain things in which we so rarely meet with our double that it seems a miracle when that chance befalls" (361; ch. 24).

Lucy's vision of Polly as a duplicate self goes to the heart of Fletcher's point that analyzing the daemonic projection imparts information about the

“imaginative projector.” Polly is, in fact, the irrational, yearning child in Lucy, the “ghost” of her own “one-ideal nature” obsessed with the beloved other. Lucy projects onto Polly her reverence for the beloved “Papa” and yearning for a home in the world, and given the urgency of those desires, Lucy, too, is a “precocious fanatic” and “untimely saint” worshipping her image of a secular god.

What seems on the surface a psychological projection, does, in fact, tell us something about the kind of novel we are reading. It reflects the distinction between the realistic text – Polly will eventually find satisfaction in the material world – and the symbolic text – Lucy will find satisfaction in the spiritual world. It also tells us that at this stage of her journey, Lucy is yet bound by deterministic psychological imperatives. The questions she poses about Polly’s future reflect Lucy’s earthbound state of mind, and intimate the nature of her, not Polly’s, journey:

How will she get through this world, or battle with this life? How will she bear the shocks and repulses, the humiliations and desolation, which books, and my own reason tell me are prepared for all flesh? (93; ch. 3)

Her questions concern her own “battle with this life,” her use of a battle metaphor latently indicating the symbolic form her journey will take. As a convention of allegory, the battle, according to Fletcher, presents a “mental conflict” in a symmetrical and balanced form, “first the argument on one side, then the argument on the other” (159). Here the war is waged by characters in the context of present and past forms, each character explicating the nature of Lucy’s

internal struggle and bringing her to resolution. The questions she asks for the sake of Polly represent her own fear and trembling, but stated so literally, reflect only the realistic side of her conflict. In a later chapter, when she knows “that a way, however narrow and difficult would in time open” (107; ch. 5), she poses questions in her own voice and in an authentic mythic language. Addressing the problem of identity in terms of “Creation,” “Destiny,” and “Quest” (Slochower 15), she asks, instead, “Whence did I come? Whither should I go? What should I do?” (107; ch. 5)

Each significant character in *Villette*, each allegorical projection, will supply the answer to those questions, and each, according to Fletcher’s definition, will carry its own “iconographic meaning” (34). The childhood relationship between Graham and Polly, for example, foreshadows their mature love, both in the form of chilvaric romance and in the inevitable trivialization of that ideal form in the modern world. Polly, either “perched” above the others doing her needlework on a high chair, “still, silent, dilligent, absorbed, womanly” (73; ch. 2), or lifted “on high” by Graham, “one hand [holding] her poised aloft above his head” (75; ch. 2), hardly seems a child at times – as Lucy herself notes – but the epitome of the ideal Lady, constrained, inaccessible, impervious to Graham’s teasing bid for attention. Responding to Mrs. Bretton’s reference to Polly as “Mr. Home’s little girl,” Graham first addresses his mother and then Polly in a language parodying courtly romance:

I consider your expression of the least ceremonious: Miss Home

I should certainly have said, in venturing to speak of the

gentlewoman to whom I allude.

Miss Home, pursued Graham [. . .], might I have the honour to introduce myself since no one else seems willing to render you and me that service? Your slave John Graham Bretton. She looked at him; he rose and bowed quite gravely. She deliberately put down thimble, scissors, work; descended with precaution from her perch, and curtsying with unspeakable seriousness said, How do you do?

(73-74; ch. 2)

With this reference to the words and form of chivalric romance, Brontë establishes early on Polly's and Graham's symbolic status, emphasized further by the names Brontë assigns them to mark and contain their iconographic meaning. That she gives important characters, except Lucy Snowe and Ginevra, more than one name indicates that they represent a conflicted idea in Lucy's mind. For example, the name Paulina Mary Home de Bassompierre fixes the character's symbolic function in the novel as a feminine and secular St. Paul, worshiping at the altar of domestic love. The name further alludes to the distinction St. Paul makes between the married woman (in the novel, Paulina), who "careth for the things of the world and how she may please her husband," and the unmarried woman (in the novel, Lucy), who in a metaphoric sense "careth for the things of the Lord, [in the novel, Paul Emanuel] that she may be holy both in body and in spirit" (1 Corinthians 7.33-34). Although for St. Paul chastity, not marriage, is the ideal state of being, he considers the union between husband and wife a sacrament (Ephesians 5.32), as it is for Paulina and John Bretton: "the

unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband" (1 Corinthians 7.14). He calls on "husbands [to] love [their] wives even as Christ also loved the Church" (Ephesians 5.25), "[making] matrimonial love in all its aspects – sexual, social and personal – a form of spiritual existence" (De Rougement 97).

Paulina's character embodies the western ideal of love persisting through time, the epitome of love as St. Paul defines it --

Love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It

bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all

things. (1Corinthians 13) --

and the ideal of romance narrative, which transposes St. Paul's Christian values into a religious and secular literary form. As she is written, she connotes the cult of the Virgin in medieval religious literature, the refined love of chivalric romance during the same period, and the sentimental love of popular romance in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Her heredity, a mixture of French (de Bassompierre) and British (Home), reflects the dual history of romance, its aesthetic traditions and languages of origin, which Paulina speaks in the courtly manner, "modestly," "diffidently, with "true" "sweetness," and a "fine and penetrating [. . .] sense":

It was a polite Frenchman, M. Z.--, a very learned, but quite

a courtly man, who had drawn her into discourse. [. . .]

her French [. . .] was faultless -- the structure correct, the idioms true, the accent pure [. . .]. (398; ch. 27)

A modern representation of the ideal Lady, her archetype, the Virgin Mary, and the projection of Lucy's own spirit made flesh, Paulina seems to Lucy to combine the virtues of all three: dressed always in white, whether "sprinkled slightly with drops of scarlet" (357; ch. 24), decorated with an "evergreen" "wreath" (358; ch. 24), the leaves of lilies (553; ch. 38), or "all white and light and bridal" (550; ch. 38), the "little white Countess" (362; ch. 25) is spiritualized by Lucy as a "lamp chastely lucent, guarding [. . .] a flame vital and vestal" (359; ch. 24); and viewed as a jewel among women, a precious object, "pearl of great price" (193; ch. 13) and "truest purity" (459; ch. 32) by Mr. Home and John Bretton. True to the teaching of St. Paul and the conventions of courtly love, she obeys Mr. Home, often to her detriment: as a child, she consents to his abandoning her to satisfy his wishes; and as a mature woman, she is prepared to sacrifice her love for John Bretton to satisfy her father's need. She is self-restrained -- "you would despise me," she says so astutely to Lucy, "if I failed in self-control" -- and, like Lucy, modest, accomplished, refined, subtle, and full of grace, but unselfconscious of her regal virtues and her power. "For her the smile of feeling rather than of conscious power slept soft in her eyes" (460; ch. 32). Lucy's observations about Paulina reveal the vital truth about Lucy's own character --

In Paulina there was more force, both of feeling and character
than most people thought -- than Graham himself imagined -- than

she would ever show to those who did not wish to see it (399; ch. 27)

– but as Lucy envisions her, she seems to embody the ethos of courtly love:

The grace and mind of Paulina charmed these thoughtful

Frenchmen: the fineness of her beauty, the soft courtesy of her

manner, her immature, but real and inbred tact, pleased their

national taste; they clustered about her [. . .] to touch on many

subjects in letters, in arts, in actual life, on which it appeared that

she had both read and reflected. (399; ch. 27)

In the course of the narrative, however, Paulina's character will take a more trivial form. As Lucy evolves into a more autonomous and spiritual being, the "unearthly saint" which is Paulina's character gradually becomes a composite of past and present forms, the ideal Lady of courtly romance and the Victorian ideal of the woman as domestic saint. Her gods, Mr. Home and John Bretton, both scientists and worldly men, are at first unworthy of her love: Mr. Home's reference to Paulina as "the only pearl I have"; his fear that "now others will find out that she is pure and of price [and] [. . .] covet her" (522; ch.37); and his attempt to figuratively smother her (533; ch.37) are among several allusions in the novel to Shakespeare's *Othello*, whose words about Desdemona inform the words of Mr. Home. Describing Desdemona as a precious jewel and lamenting the ignoble jealousy which compelled him literally to smother her, Othello acknowledges her murder as the act "Of one whose hand,/Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away/Richer than all his tribe"(V.ii). Paulina, too, is devalued, misread and, metaphorically speaking, in danger of losing her life, and in both

instances, the pearl, as the kingdom of heaven (Matt.13:44), is depleted of purity and rendered corrupt. For Othello, Mr. Home, and John Bretton, the beloved is reduced to an ornament or an idea that serves their vanity, while she is riven between her own humanity and their impoverished visions of her value. In Shakespeare's tragedy, the main characters, Othello, Iago, and Desdemona, are "double existent" -- and in the novel, Paulina says outright, I "feel myself a thing double existent, -- a child to that dear papa [Mr. Home], but no more a child to myself" (464; ch. 32). For John Bretton, too, she carries double meaning: "The pearl he admired was in itself of great price and truest purity, but he was not the man who, in appreciating the gem, could forget its setting" (459; ch. 32).

Until both men kneel before her separate adult being, Paulina will not fill her rightful place as the beloved, nor they theirs as the adoring knights in her service. Her conversation with Lucy about the nature of love seems to fix Paulina's symbolic place in the text as the ideal Lady of courtly romance, the one who receives her lover as suppliant and bestows her favors in return. She questions Schiller's conception of love -- "Ich habe gelebt und geliebet" -- as the highest earthly happiness:

is that the summit of earthly happiness, the end of life -- to love? I don't think it is. It may be the extreme of mortal misery, it may be sheer waste of time, and fruitless torture of feeling. If Schiller had said to be loved -- he might have come nearer the truth. Is not that another thing, Lucy, to be loved?
(389; ch. 26)

With this question she differentiates *eros* and *agape*, courtly and Christian love, secular and religious romance, romance and the Gospel, and in so doing, articulates an issue central to the novel and to Lucy's quest for a unified identity. Paulina finally chooses worldly passion, sentiment, and domesticity in choosing the love of Mr. Home and John Bretton. But for Lucy neither man will signify Home or Father because their love is "born of beauty" and hers "wrought" by intellect and informed by Grace, a distinction which, when consciously and fully recognized by Lucy, transforms her into a spiritually authentic and autonomous being.

Until her symbolic character takes a more mundane form, Paulina's ideal Lady finds its counterpart in John Bretton's chivalric hero. She recalls that when they were children, the reflective and courtly side of his nature was drawn out by her presence, but only on Sundays; on other days, she says, "I was of little consequence to him":

I remember walking with him hand in hand to St. Mary's, and
His finding the places in my prayer-book; and how good and still
he was on Sunday evenings! (361; ch. 24)

To John Bretton, she may be Sunday's child, but in their adult lives Paulina will have a more consistent and enduring effect on his character and conduct: she will become his home and moral center in the world; she will "develope fully the best of his nature" (467; ch. 32), transforming him into a more civilized man, and more nearly an exemplar of the romantic ideal. "His faults [will decay], his virtues [ripen], he [will rise] in intellectual refinement, [. . .] [win] in moral

profit" (532; ch. 37), and as proof of his worthiness, do "homage to Paulina as his sovereign" (460; ch. 32).

Although Brontë also describes John Graham Bretton in more mundane terms he is, both literally and figuratively, her idea of the "true young English gentleman." His name, like Paulina's, is a signifier for the Celtic origin of romance, "Bretton" referring to "Britannia," "Bretagne," and "Britones," as the people of both countries are called (Jackson 83); and Graham, in Old English, "grand" or "gravel," and "ham" or "homestead," that name a signifier perhaps for his forbearance, his mettle and his British roots. He travels, like Lucy, from Britain to Belgium, not Brittany, but nevertheless traces the genre's development in reverse time, from the British romance narrative to its French sources. In addition, he possesses the knightly virtues of his twelfth century forbears: he is rather a "man of action than of thought" (341; ch. 23), demonstrating physical courage and fortitude in rescuing Paulina from the potential danger of a fire and the crush of the crowd; he is charitable to the poor and loyal to his mother, Paulina, and Lucy; honorable in his resolve to preserve Ginevra's reputation; and with one exception -- his misguided love for Ginevera -- generally balanced and self-restrained. His charm, intelligence and beauty complete the image of the knight and hero of romance, who in the modern narrative is represented as the man of science. Dr. John Bretton is the new hero, the materialistic man in a materialistic age: moderation and pragmatism are the lynchpins of his imagination; status, conferred by beauty, fashion, and wealth is central to his concern:

In his victrix he required all that was here visible -- the imprint of high cultivation, the consecration of a careful and authoritative protection, the adjuncts that Fashion decrees, Wealth purchases, and Taste adjusts; for these conditions his spirit stipulated ere it surrendered. (460; ch. 32)

Comparing him to the “golden image” of Nebuchadnezzar, Lucy considers John Bretton’s character in the context of biblical and literary type, suggesting that in his pride he emulates god, as Chaucer’s Monk claims about Nebuchadnezzar (“Monk’s Tale” 7.22159-69; 2562.63) and Spenser claims in the *Faerie Queene* -- “There was that great proud King of Babylon, /That would compell all nations to adore, /And him as onely God to call upon” (1.5.47.1-3). Like his prototype, she claims him a hero -- “heroic at this moment will I hold him to be” (327; ch. 22) -- but a conventional hero of secular romance, a graven image and not a god: “There was no hour, and scarcely a moment of the times I spent with him, that in act, or speech or look, he did not betray something that was not a god” (271; ch. 19).

In fact, Paulina, “more subtle than spiritual,” and John, the epitome of “gentlemanly conduct” and a “man of the world,” are drawn more specifically from secular romance narrative than from the more spiritual romance lyric, both characters fitting the distinction W. T. H. Jackson makes between the two genres. In the lyric, Jackson says, “a case can be made for ‘spiritual’ love where the physical side is deliberately rejected,” while in the narrative, “worship does not go beyond the externals of service and certain conventional manifestations [. . .].

Little attempt is made,” he goes on to say, “to analyze the nature of love, nor is it ever ‘platonic’ in the sense that only spiritual union is sought. The goal of the lovers in the romances is to win their lady fully [. . .]” (99). What Lucy knows about Paulina – “by what a good and strong root her graces held to the firm soil of reality” (400; ch. 27)-- is true of the “cool young Briton” as well: “for [. . .] what was wild and intense, dangerous, sudden and flaming, he had no sympathy, and held with it no communion” (341; ch. 23). Their love, though charmed, is in and of the world; it promises harmony and good fortune, a secular paradise on earth, as Lucy in her final thoughts about Paulina observes:

I think it is deemed good that you two should live in peace and
be happy -- not as angels, but as few are happy amongst mortals.
Some lives are thus blessed: it is God’s will: it is the attesting trace
and lingering evidence of Eden. (468; ch. 32)

On the other hand, the relationship between John and Ginevra is a corruption of the courtly paradigm. Consistent with this allegorical reading, is the likely connection between the the names “Ginevra,” and Guinivere, who in betraying Arthur falls from grace. It is, as Jackson points out, “love of a destructive kind, the love between Lancelot and Guinivere, which shatters the Arthurian world in the later versions of the story, and even in the romances where that love is idealized the destructive element is always present” (100). Ginevra’s character is written as that destructive element in the romance narrative, the symbolic legacy of that shattered world, and of the later decadent form of romance carrying the genre into “a final stage of dispersion and decay”

(Gibbs 15). Her philistine values and chaotic mind counter the Arthurian ideals embodied in Paulina, reflect the fall of the romance genre, and more important to Brontë's concerns, echo the "long, withdrawing roar"¹⁰ of form and meaning in the modern age.

Ginevra's character may allude not only to Guinevere but also to the ladies of Walter Scott's romance, *The Bridal of Triermain*: to Guendolen, who in tempting King Arthur, brings chaos to his kingdom; and to Gwyneth, who in repeating her mother's seductive behavior, brings further destruction to the court. Parallels can be found in the root syllable of their names, in "Gwen," whose meaning -- "fair," "blessed," "holy" -- is ironically suggestive in both texts, and in the characters, theme, and structure of Brontë's novel and Scott's romance: one parallel in the function of Scott's framing narrator as a modern-day minstrel, which broadly speaking, Lucy is as well; another, in the narrator's lady, the aristocratic Lucy, who, like her nineteenth century counterpart, is engulfed by the decadent world she inhabits. In Scott as in Brontë, the narrative itself is the transforming medium, a point Stuart Curran makes about Scott's romance, noting that the hero wins his lady "by his minstrelsy -- and the constancy of the virtues it embodies" (137). Apparent, also, in Curran's reading of Scott is the different use each author makes of history. From Scott's perspective, "the past [is] domesticated in the present" (137), the present enchanted by the past; while Brontë's mythopoeic vision raises the bar considerably higher: the vital structures of the past are recreated in the present, the present transformed and redeemed by the power of the past.

Ginevera, like Paulina, is Sunday's child, but the "child of pleasure" (211; ch. 14), not thought. Reflection and spirituality are so beyond her imaginative powers that "a weak transient amaze was all she knew of the sensation of wonder" (148; ch. 9). While Paulina spends Sunday in reflection, for Ginevera "Sunday was a holiday, which she always passed with friends resident in town" (149; ch. 9). One of those is Dr. John, whom, in return for his courtesy and chivalric attention, she dubs "Isidore," a form of the pagan "Isis," because his own Christian name, she says, is not "very pretty" (149; ch. 9). Beautiful herself, and elegantly dressed in a "pale lilac silk" version of the royal purple or the "deep" blood-colored "crimson" of corporeal matter, she seems the heroine of the romance narrative in every external sense. However, what Lucy knows and John will discover is that his idealized Lady is a parody of that form, in essence a vain and foolish coquette, a vulgar bourgeoisie, but nevertheless, and possibly just because she is who she is, John's "ardent admiration -- perhaps genuine love -- was at her command" (149; ch. 9).

Until John recognizes her pagan nature he worships her as a "paragon," a "gem without flaw," a "pearl of great price." Claiming her at the height of his idolatry as "my divinity -- the angel of my career" (295; ch. 20), she seems to him "spotless," "good," "unspeakably beautiful" (192-93; ch. 13). As Ginevera herself points out, he idealizes her as "sa reine," but not returning his love, she insists in no uncertain terms that "il n'est pas mon roi" (155; ch. 9), and more candidly than he, assesses his error and her own insufficiency:

The man is too romantic and devoted, and he expects something more of me than I find it convenient to be. He thinks I am perfect: furnished me with all sorts of sterling qualities and solid virtues, such as I never had nor intend to have. Now one can't help, in his presence, rather trying to justify his good opinion; and it does so tire one to be goody, and to talk sense – for he really thinks I am sensible. (155; ch. 9)

John's enlightenment takes place at a concert, where Ginevra is seated among the Court of Labassecour and the Villette aristocracy. He looks up at her, fascinated, as usual, by her presence, prepared to be the "humblest of her servants," to do her "homage" (295; ch. 20), while "his lady-love beamed upon him from a sphere above his own: he could not come near her; he was not certain that he could win from her a look" (292; ch. 20). Lucy watches to see if his imagined queen "would so far favour him" (292; ch. 20), but instead John becomes painfully aware that she is anything but regal; "she is neither a pure angel nor a pure-minded woman" (296; ch. 20). For the first time, he sees that she is crudely condescending to him and especially to his mother, Mrs. Bretton.

Ginevra symbolizes the Victorian age in its most decadent and hollow form. Not having the capacity to describe, draw differences, or think abstractly, she renders the symbolic world meaningless, the sacred sign indistinguishable from any other in the "chaotic" "ragbag" of her mind (155; ch. 9). She is the consummate heir of Babylonian legacy, the alienated being imprisoned in historical time, speaking the "tittle tattle" of a fallen world. She possesses neither

“accuracy” nor “purity” (398; ch. 27); to her “nothing is sacred” (295; ch. 20). She values language so little that she has “neither words, the power of description, nor the power of putting [words] together so as to make graphic phrases” (150; ch. 9). Her disordered mind contains only images of nameless things, a defining flaw in any case, but especially in a novel in which names denote essence. She trivializes by misnaming others, referring to Lucy as “Timon,” “old Crusty,” “old Diogenes,” “chère Grogneuse,” “angel farouche”; to John Bretton as “Ourson” and “Isidore”; and to Mrs. Bretton as “the old lady.” When “in temporary oblivion of the real name,” she objectifies the world and the word, rendering them flesh by substituting the word “chose” in its stead:

It was a habit she had: “chose” came in at every turn in her conversation -- the convenient substitute for any missing word in any language she might chance at the time to be speaking. (115; ch. 6)

Whether alluding to the Ginevra as John Bretton’s ersatz queen, or the royal couple of Romance narrative, Arthur and Guinivere, or the biblical Queen Vashti, or describing the portrait of the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra (the latter two discussed below), Brontë makes a point with these royal images about the decline of order, form, and linguistic integrity in modern culture. In the concert hall, Lucy reads the “hieroglyphics” of historical time in the faded figures of the present-day King and Queen of Labassecour. They do not hold audience, nor the center of power; rather they sit as passive members of an audience which, in the context of the fictional narrative, Genevra and Paulina dominate: the former as the robust but decidedly vulgar new woman, representing the striving and

aquisitive energy of the age; the latter as the refined ideal Lady, diluted in her present form by the new ideal of the respectable and submissive domestic queen. On the surface, and to the bourgeois and aristocratic audience, the presence of the King and Queen suggests that the traditional hierarchical structure is in place; the royal couple properly positioned at the head of their court, with their subjects appropriately distanced. “[Straining] her powers of vision to take in these specimens of European royalty,” Lucy becomes aware that the chain of being is impaired at the top. She had expected to behold the regal signs of majesty “seated, en permanence, on a throne, bonneted with a crown and furnished, as to the hand with a sceptre.” Seeing instead “only a middle-aged soldier and a rather young lady [. . .]” (289; ch. 20), she reads “the meaning of those characters written without hand”: the king, bent and gray, made impotent, abstracted by a “constitutional melancholy” and haunted by the fear and trembling of mortality.

Those eyes had looked on the visits of a certain ghost – had long waited the comings and goings of that strangest spectre, Hypochondria [. . .] dark as Doom, pale as Malady, and well nigh strong as Death. Her comrade and victim thinks to be happy one moment – “Not so,” says she; “I come.” And she freezes the blood in his heart, and beclouds the light in his eye. (290; ch. 20)

The Queen, too, appears to be the faded survivor of history rather than the descendant of a royal lineage. Described by Lucy as a “mild, thoughtful and graceful woman,” wholly solicitous of her husband and child, she seems in Lucy’s final analysis, like Paulina, “no sovereign but a lady,” more wife and mother,

more “good angel” than queen. Yet her features evoke in Lucy an image of “remembered effigies, where similar lines appeared, under phase ignoble; feeble, or sensual, or cunning as the case might be” (290; ch. 20).

This sordid image of past royalty points to the specific example of a voluptuous and decadent Queen, to Cleopatra, the subject of a painting so well lit and cordoned off from other paintings in the museum that it “seemed to consider itself the queen of the collection” (275; ch. 19). Using the language of personification to describe its central place in the exhibit, Lucy endows the painting with life, but merely the life of an actor competing for center stage. Like the grieving Belgian Queen who enacts the role of the powerful monarch, the Egyptian Queen is reduced to an artificial image of royalty and a symbol of decadent life. Lucy sees beyond the response of the audience in the concert hall – “both for the aristocracy and the honest bourgeoisie [the peculiarity of that spectacle] seemed to be wholly invisible” (291; ch. 20) – and beyond the “orthodox” opinion of the “worshipping connoisseurs” (275; ch. 19) who view the painting. To her eye, the image of an overblown, inert, immodest, and slovenly queen is a pretentious and “enormous piece of claptrap,” her assessment shared by John Bretton whose perception of “truth and beauty,” as evidenced by his choice of Ginevra, is, however, generally indiscriminating. In this case too, even as he disparages the Cleopatra as a depiction of “le type du voluptueux,” he naively invites Lucy to “compare that mulatto” with his idol, Ginevra (282; ch. 19), who Lucy well knows is an actor of the same type.

Present as a contrast to this painting, in the same gallery are four “hideous” paintings representing four stages in the life of a woman: a prim young girl; a married woman praying in her chamber, “holding her hands plastered together”; a young mother watching over her infant; and a widow studying the headstone of her dead husband. (277; ch. 19) Paul, who is also in the gallery, demands that Lucy look away from the scandalous Cleopatra towards these more respectable images of the feminine ideal. But Lucy does not acquiesce. These icons of womanhood will not serve as markers for her own journey, except as such markers do for Christian in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, to show the negative side of her vision and the fate that she must avoid. She is no Polly, no prim and proper domestic queen, to be forced into the narrow role of these four “anges,” who appear to her as “grim and gray as burglars and cold and vapid as [the] ghosts” (278; ch. 19), their insubstantial images portray. In one sense these and the Cleopatra paintings function dramatically, although they are not performances in themselves. However, they do, in effect, produce action in the audience where, for the purposes of the novel, the actual performance takes place. More importantly the paintings, the concert, and other public performances, and the responses they create, stand out from the literal text as signifiers for the novel’s form and meaning. The chapter on Vashti’s performance, for example, provides an important key to reading the novel allegorically, as does Lucy’s performance in a play in which the dramatic fiction is a response, an imitation, and interpretation of the framing narrative.

Vashti's stage performance is substantively analogous to Lucy's written allegory. The biblical queen, as her name in Hebrew suggests, is the one "most desired" until degraded and deposed by King Ahasuerus in favor of Esther. In Christian tradition Ahasuerus and Esther prefigure Christ and Mary, while the fallen Vashti becomes a symbol for "Synagoga," or the hardened heart.

(David Lyle Jeffrey 807) This interpretation of Vashti as a satanic force informs Lucy's narrative, but also echoes an interpretation Brontë makes in a student essay written in Belgium in 1843. The essay entitled "Athens Saved by Poetry"¹¹ suggests a connection between her concept of the biblical Queen Vashti and the Greek mythological figure Cassandra, who, Brontë says "resembles the mysterious image of Sais, the goddess of truth." Both Cassandra and Vashti have been humiliated and subjugated, each written by Brontë as a daemonic force of nature, and represented as a primal and awful truth. Both astonish their audience by their terrible presence, as in Brontë's essay Electra's first sight of Cassandra remains engraven in her memory:

Oh I see her still, her ghost appears before my eyes in the
Shadows of the forest! White, stiff, petrified, as if her veins
were filled with ice in place of blood; all disheveled, her
locks in disarray, streaming at the mercy of the wind; her
white shoulders gleaming beneath her wild hair, like the
moon through clouds. And her great dark eyes -- what fire
shone in them! what flash of inspiration! they were not a
woman's eyes, they were a god's -- or a demon's -- I know not

which; (Lonoff 346, 348)

Vashti's performance has a similar effect on Lucy: "Behold! I found upon her something neither of woman nor of man: in each of her eyes sat a devil":

Suffering had struck that stage empress; and she stood before
Her audience [. . .] locked in struggle, rigid in resistance.

[. . .] Even in the uttermost frenzy of energy is each maenad
movement royally, imperially, incedingly upborne. Her hair
flying loose in revel or war, is still an angel's hair and glorious
under a halo. (339-40; ch. 23)

Brontë's Vashti carries other symbolic connotations as well: she is the shadow of Milton's rebellious angel, banished from heaven into a prison of "utter darkness." Faced with the cost of his rebellion,

his doom

Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought

Both of lost happiness and lasting pain

Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes

That witness'd huge affliction and dismay

Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate: [. . .]. (I; 53-58)

Lucy, too, speaks the incandescent language of tragedy to describe the "doom" and "wrath" in Vashti's performance. Vashti is "torn by seven devils: devils which cried sore and rent the tenement they haunted; but still refused to be exorcised" (339; ch. 23):

They wrote HELL on her straight, haughty brow. They tuned

her voice to the note of torment. They writhed her regal face
to a demoniac mask. Hate and Murder and Madness incarnate,
she stood. (339; ch. 23)

In all of its mythical implications, Brontë's vision of Vashti represents another version of Lucy's daemonic self. For Lucy, too, "life must be looked on [as] a hopeless desert" (228; ch. 15), fate as a "permanent foe, never to be conciliated" (229; ch. 15). She and Vashti inhabit a shadow world of lost meaning; both project and give life and substance to their inner demons, Lucy in her allegory, Vashti in her performance. But as Lucy seeks the light, Vashti embraces pure passion, unmediated by "Hope," "Desire," "Impulse" or "Conception" (341; ch. 15):

To her what hurts becomes immediately embodied; she looks on
it as a thing that can be attacked, worried down, torn in shreds.
Scarcely a substance herself she grapples to conflict with
abstractions. (340; ch. 15)

Despite Vashti's embrace of pure passion, however, the drama on stage is mediated just because it is an aesthetic creation, and because it is formally as well as substantively analogous to the framing allegory. In the performance and the written allegory, every utterance is an action. The actress and the author project one abstract idea onto the stage or page, enacting that idea to give it form, motion, and personality. In addition, the performance and novel reflect on their own making: Vashti's performance, although rehearsed, occurs in the moment and seems immediate and organic, one gesture spontaneously opening up and

leading to the next so that the process of its making is elaborated and revealed; and in the allegorical novel, the narrator steps out of her role as storyteller, speaks to her audience, sometimes openly, sometimes with design, but always with the intention of investigating and reflecting on the act of writing as she is writing.

Brontë also has something to say about the nature and permanence of the tragic form. Vashti's performance explores and illuminates the conditions of tragedy and the state of mind of an individual brought to her downfall: "Fallen, insurgent, banished, she remembers the heaven where she rebelled" (340; ch. 23). But, Brontë concludes, as the memory of heaven is waning in the modern age, so too is the tragic genre. In fact, the performance arouses no more pity or fear in John Bretton than it does in the Athenian poet's sleeping Spartan audience.¹² Treated as barbarians in Brontë's essay, the Spartans, unlike the cultured Athenians, can be compared in this context to the exemplar of modern culture, to John Bretton, who lacking all tragic dimension and appreciation of genius, "[judges] [the actress] as a woman, not an artist" (342; ch. 23): "Her agony did not pain him, her wild moan -- worse than a shriek -- did not much move him; her fury revolted him somewhat, but not to the point of horror" (341; ch. 23).

To explicate the allegorical narrative further, Brontë creates a microcosm of the literal narrative in the form of a staged play. Enlisted as an actor, Lucy agrees to perform with one resolute proviso, that she retain her feminine attire despite her role as one of the male suitors. With her female identity in place, she

functions not merely as an actor but as an allegorical agent personifying several ideas at once. The character she plays is her opposite in every way; he is the “fop,” the male “butterfly,” “talker” and “traitor,” who competes with the sincere suitor for the love of the coquette, played fittingly by Ginevra. The fop is modeled on Ginevra’s actual lover, Colonel de Hamal; the sincere suitor on Dr. John; and the coquette on Ginevra herself. Adding another dimension to these portrayals, Lucy changes the fiction by “[putting] her [own] idea into the part” and giving new meaning to the role she plays:

In the “Ours,” or sincere lover, I saw Dr. John. Did I pity him,
as erst? No, I hardened my heart, rivalled and out-rivalled him.
I knew myself but a fop, but where he was outcast I could please.
Now I know I acted as if wishful and resolute to win and conquer.
(210; ch. 14)

The recreated fiction both mirrors and subverts the framing narrative. The truth as Lucy knows it is that Dr. John and she have actually been out-rivalled, that Ginevra loves the “fop,” Colonel de Hamal, and not John, and John loves the coquette, Ginevera, not Lucy.

However, in playing the fop, Lucy is doing more than exposing external reality; she is also trying on the identity of de Hamal, and through him, Ginevra, his “hardened” and “resolute” psychic counterpart, and another daemonic projection of Lucy’s fragmented self. Acting not in opposition but spontaneously and in unison, she and Ginevra change “the nature of the role[s]” they play.
(210; ch. 14) While their collusion is evident in the realistic text, stating that

Ginevra, like Polly, reveals herself solely to Lucy, it is more to the point to note that Lucy, as allegorical agent, knows everything there is to know about both, since, as proposed here, they are manifestations of her own psychic drama. What Lucy claims when Ginevra anonymously intrudes on her, “Had I been blind, I should have known who this was” (314; ch. 21), Ginevra confirms:

I am far more at ease with you old lady – you dear cross patch
– who take me at my lowest, and know me to be coquettish, and
ignorant, and flirting and fickle, and silly, and selfish, all the other
sweet things you and I have agreed to be a part of my character.

(155; ch. 9)

In fact, it is only with Ginevra that Lucy has physical contact. Lucy grasping Ginevra, Ginevra leaning her weight on Lucy, they seem to claim one another: “she squeezed the arm of which she had now obtained full possession [. . .] till I was obliged to pause in the park and laugh”(394; ch. 27). In conflict with her on the surface and for convincing reasons, Lucy is nevertheless truly possessed by her, for as she notes with some wonder, she gives Ginevra sustenance and freely chooses to be her companion:

I don't know why I chose to give my bread to Ginevra rather
than to another; nor why, if two had to share the convenience
of one drinking vessel [. . .] I always contrived that she should
be my convive, and rather like to let her take the lion's share
[. . .]: so it was however, and she knew it; and therefore while we
wrangled daily, we were never alienated. (313; ch. 21)

To attain freedom Lucy will be required to shed the weight of Ginevra, as she must of Paulina, from her psyche. She will have to deconstruct her vision of her as “a sort of heroine,” empowered by a “kind of spirit” to win John Bretton’s love, not merely in melodrama, but in life. Until then, however, Lucy perceives Ginevra as one who is blessed by happiness:

By True Love was Ginevra followed: never could she be alone.

[. . .] I conceived an electric chord of sympathy between them,
a fine chain of mutual understanding sustaining union through a
separation of a hundred leagues -- carrying across mound and
hollow, communication by prayer and wish. (230-31; ch. 15)

Both Ginevra and John Bretton seem to have special dispensation, for he, too, is followed by love, the love of his mother, of Paulina, and Lucy, who shares Paulina’s idealization of him as the “good” and “gallant” hero of Romance fiction. But his plea that Lucy become more intimate with Ginevra explicitly signifies both to the reader, if not yet to Lucy, that in worshipping John Bretton -- “I would have followed that frank tread through continual night, to the world’s end” (125; ch. 7) -- she is worshipping a false idol and prophet. To realize her quest, she must move in the opposite direction, away from him and from Ginevra. Now it is Ginevra who voices the questions that Lucy is attempting to answer: “Who are you Miss Snowe?” (393; ch. 27) “Are you anybody?” (394; ch. 26), questions Lucy cannot answer candidly because even if she knew -- and at this stage of her quest, she does not -- Ginevra would not understand. Lucy therefore answers first in the subjunctive, “Perhaps a personage in disguise” (393; ch. 26), which in terms of

Ginevra's limited capacity and function in the novel is ironically close to the truth; and then in factual but inauthentic terms, "Yes I am a rising character: once an old lady's companion, then a nursery-governess, now a school teacher" (394; ch. 26).

Looking in the mirror on another occasion, Lucy, in fact, sees the reflection of herself as a person "in disguise," a stranger dressed in pink instead of her usual gray nun-like attire. In her own performance she refuses to wear inauthentic clothing, but this time, at Mrs. Bretton's bequest, agrees to wear pink, that color an inappropriate expression of Lucy's core self but a true manifestation of her "mental conflict." Dressed in a blend of Paulina's white and Ginevra's red, Lucy remains divided between these two unresolved aspects of her being. Not surprisingly, John Bretton approves of her dress; only Paul Emanuel, her mentor and her true beloved, recognizes its inauthenticity: "he was looking at me gravely and intently: at me or rather, at my pink dress -- sardonic comment on which gleamed in his eye" (299; ch. 20).

Paul knows what Lucy is discovering, that her identity rests on different ground: class, wealth, and the accumulation of arcane knowledge are, in Lucy's words, "third class lodgers," relegated to the back room of her mind. Her language gives material form to metaphysical space in the same way that Emily Dickinson's image of the "House" of imagination, poetry and "Possibility" does a decade later, although Lucy and Brontë, more than Dickinson, are willing to divide that space into the real and ideal:

I seemed to hold two lives -- the life of thought and that of

reality; and provided the former was nourished with a sufficiency of the strange necromantic joys of fancy, the privileges of the latter might remain limited to daily bread, hourly work, and a roof of shelter.

(140; ch. 8)

Allegory is the very form that will allow Lucy to juxtapose and then unify thought and “reality,” “fancy,” and “feeling”: in giving an idea physical form, personality and action, she is able to exorcise daemons, extract the ideal from the real, and create a unified spirit; in joining reason with feeling, she creates a poem such as Bonaparte attributes to Dante and George Eliot, one “in which thought and feeling have not only a common origin and a common end but are conceived as one” (*The Triptych and the Cross* 4).

There are several beginnings to Lucy’s quest: one, as is characteristic of quest literature, opens the novel; another, the chapter on Miss Marchmont, whose name means “walking up the mountain,” defines the novel’s visionary terms. Both women are mourning the dead,¹³ in Lucy’s case, unidentified, and in Miss Marchmont’s, her long-dead lover. Miss Marchmont has been an “impotent” “cripple” for twenty years, and Lucy, in the time between her stay in Bretton and the present, has become a “faded, hollow-eyed vision” (96; ch. 4). They cling to each other as if to become one being, the space around and between them circumscribed and narrow, as the allegorical form demands: “Two hot, close rooms,” Lucy says, “thus became my world; and a crippled old woman, my mistress, my friend, my all” (97; ch. 4). Lucy describes her mortal lot as “a sleep

and a forgetting" -- "I forgot that there were fields, woods, rivers, seas, an everchanging sky outside the steam-dimmed lattice of this sick chamber" (97; ch. 4) -- while Miss Marchmont, whose memory returns, has her first glimpse of Immortality:

I love Memory tonight [. . .]: I prize her as my best friend.

She is just now giving me a deep delight; she is bringing back to my heart, in warm and beautiful life, realities -- not mere empty ideas --but what were once realities, and that I long have thought decayed, dissolved, mixed in with grave-mould. I possess just now the hours, the thoughts, the hopes of my youth [. . .].

While I loved, and while I was loved, what an existence I enjoyed!

What a glorious year I can recall -- how bright it comes back to me!

(98-99; ch. 4)

Miss Marchmont's deathbed confession of love for her dead lover suggests that Brontë is thinking about Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode" and Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," both meditative poems about loss and recovery. The speakers in the poems and in the novel remember their past lives and look to the future for renewal. In Wordsworth and Brontë the memory of nature "bring[s] the philosophic mind" -- in Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode":

What though the radiance was once so bright

Be now for ever taken from my sight,

.....

We will grieve not, rather find

Strength [. . .]

.....

In the faith that looks through death," (175-86)

and in Brontë:

What a living spring -- what a warm, glad summer -- what
soft moonlight, silvering the autumn evenings -- what strength
of hope under the ice-bound waters and frost hoar fields of that
year's winter (98-99; ch. 4) --

while Brontë and Coleridge use time and the setting of interior space to intimate eternal life: the hour is midnight, the moment when past, present and future converge. The "dead calm," (Brontë), "unhelped by any wind," (Coleridge), and the "sharp frost" making the air "keen," (Brontë) interiorize and intensify physical space. The fire "fluttering" in the grate mirrors the "idling spirit" (Coleridge) and sparks the memory of both speakers. In the poem, "The Frost performs its secret ministry," and in the novel, Lucy Snowe, originally named Lucy Frost by Brontë, "[ministers]" to the narrator. In Wordsworth and Coleridge the speakers look not to God but to nature for redemption, while in the novel the speaker's dead beloved is her god.

As another of Lucy's doubles, another projected idea "to study," Miss Marchmont gives her "the steadiness of her virtues [. . .] the power of her passions, to admire" (97; ch. 4). The bare outline of Miss Marchmont's story duplicates Lucy's own narrative: Miss Marchmont's lover dies and abandons her on Christmas day, leaving her a "woe-struck" recluse for the remainder of her life.

The holy day of God's birth brings instead the death of her beloved, the death of her god, and the death of hope. Now dying herself, she resurrects the memory of her lost love in the telling, reconciled to her loss at the last moment of her existence, as she could not be in the course of her life.

At novel's end we are told that, more than likely, Lucy has also lost her beloved, but by that time she has become a fully conscious and integrated being, her journey into the world of experience and imagination enabling her to delve deeply into real and ontological privation, to transform her life, and achieve lasting recovery and a permanent home. Language has been her divining rod; the confessional narrative, the means of professing her faith. Defying a personified Reason, she has insisted on expressing what she feels in written language -- "surely there cannot be error in making written [not spoken] language the medium [of expression]" (307; ch. 21) -- and on "[giving] a truant hour to Imagination -- [Reason's] soft, bright foe, *our* sweet Help, our divine Hope"[. . .], our "Sovereign complete" (308-309; ch. 21).¹⁴

As one means of expressing her innermost soul, Lucy attempts confession in a Catholic church, but even her confessor, Père Silas, makes a distinction between the confessional form as a holy sacrament and the form as it is routinely practiced by the church: "Confession, like other things," he admits, "is apt to become formal and trivial with habit. You have come and poured your heart out; a thing seldom done" (234; ch. 15). It is true she finds some solace in confessing to Père Silas, but it is also true that he misinterprets her spiritual crisis and fails to understand the private path she is destined to take. Inspired by her own

Protestant faith, she gives herself spiritual authority, listens to her own voice, and obeys her own Light, knowing that her “true church” is the “temple” she alone will build; her true vocation, to write her own confession in a language as primal as the language of nature, “pealing out [. . .] an ode [. . .] never delivered to man” (176; ch. 12). She rejects the Catholic church as she would have a “Babylonish furnace,” recognizing its false and seductive power and the probability

that had I visited Numero 20, Rue des Mages at the hour
and day appointed, I might just now, instead of writing this
heretic narrative, be counting my beads in the cell of a certain
Carmelite convent on the Boulevard of Crécy in Villette.¹⁵
(235; ch. 15)

No matter the consequence, Lucy does in her narrative what Vashti does in her performance. She looks inward into the abyss, confronts the horror, and calls things what they are: she calls “anguish -- anguish, and despair -- despair, writ[ing] both down in strong characters with a resolute pen” (451; ch. 31). Yet she does not hesitate to manipulate language, either by omission, contradiction, or implication, in order to awaken the reader to the narrative’s secrets. For example, she temporarily withholds from the reader and Dr. John her knowledge that he and John Bretton are the same person. By her conscious act of concealment, she places both in the position of knowing only the accessible surface of things, but at the moment of disclosure signals the reader to look more deeply into the symbolic text, and calls attention to her power to create a sacred form and construct the perfect narrative moment to announce the truth.

Lucy uses other rhetorical devices to expose the allegorical dimension of her text. She states the truth ironically¹⁶, or covertly, or says outright the opposite of what she means. She skips over precise facts about her pre- and post-Bretton life, never mentioning her early and intervening history. She permits the reader to imagine her passing the latter time happily, but admits without giving detail that she has experienced devastating loss. In another instance she is more covert. Addressing the reader on her arrival in London, she says, "My reader, I know, is one who would not thank me for an elaborate reproduction of poetic first impressions" (106; ch. 5), claiming with that statement that she is not a poet but, "in the absence of more brilliant faculties," a narrator of fact, while simultaneously suggesting the opposite: that she is indeed a poet, not of sensibility but of visionary power, of "clear thought and steady self possession" (106; ch. 5). Through these rhetorical means, she effectively informs the reader that she is choosing to hurry the narrative along, to skip over autobiographical fact and the picturesque, to focus on the essential, symbolic text. Revealing her technique and intention, she reminds the reader, once more, to pierce the surface and plumb the depths of her visionary narrative, ending her disclaimer with a series of questions which only a poet would ask: "Whence did I come? Whither should I go? What should I do?" (107; ch. 5)

Her asking these questions at midnight in the "shadow of St. Paul's" not only suggests again that privileged moment in Coleridge's poem and the moment when her quest begins, but also the Apostle's importance in the novel as the symbolic form her quest will take. Paulina Home is one incarnation of this

symbolism and M. Paul Emanuel another, more closely-drawn incarnation of the Apostle himself. If John Bretton is Paulina Home's chivalric counterpart, then M. Paul Emanuel, the Apostle and "God with us," is Lucy Snowe's spiritual counterpart: he is chaste and "might be trusted with a regiment of the fairest and the purest [. . .]" (212; ch. 14); he is her master, teacher, "Christian hero," and redeemer, the gardener planting seeds of new life in her soul, her "cloud and pillar which subdue while they guide and awe while they illumine -- hushing the impulse of fond idolatry" (309; ch.21). To Lucy he seems "more like a knight of old, religious in his way, and of spotless fame" (474; ch. 33); and in the context of the novel he is a signifier for the spirit and humanity of St. Paul, the "image and likeness of [. . .] deiform spirit" (de Voraigue 355) whose nature is nevertheless "beset with weaknesses" (362). The case Chrysostom makes in his *De laudibus Pauli* to defend those weaknesses can be made for Paul Emanuel as well:

It is meritorious and admirable to overcome the weakness of Nature by strength of will, as [St.] Paul did. [. . .] Anyone who assumes that office [of Preacher] must be not soft or lax but strong and firm in all circumstances. [. . .] To be stirred to anger is not wrong [. . .]. Just as the sword has an edge, so God has endowed our mind with an edge of ire for us to use if needed. Mildness of spirit is always good when it suits the moment, but when the circumstances do not call for it, even mildness is a vice. (362-63)

"His passions [. . .] strong, his aversions and attachments alike vivid"

(279; ch. 19), M. Paul Emanuel inspires both terror and love, and he, like his archetype, can be stirred to anger, can be “despotic” (278: ch. 19) if his “will” is “thwarted” (279; ch. 19), “exultantly snatch[ing] the screen from poor shrinking wretches” (424; ch. 29), as St. Paul did, in order to “spur somnolent [. . .] souls,” such as Lucy, “out of their inertia and apathy”(de Voraigue 363). Neither handsome nor graceful, courtly nor politic, nor liked by all, “[Paul’s] nature was of an order rarely comprehended.” Sometimes rude and savage, sometimes foolish and vain, he is nevertheless discerning and always truthful. He is John Bretton’s counter-sign, the “Prophet of the Highest” (Luke 1.78), a man, “not ambitious for worldly glory or power,” “not wise in this world” (Corinthians I 3.18) nor “wise in his generation, yet [can] he claim a filial sympathy with ‘the dayspring on high’” (423; ch. 29).

In choosing Paul Emanuel over John Bretton, Lucy chooses a different path than Paulina, the path laid out by St. Paul: *agape* over *eros*, truth over illusion, vocation over profession. At the end of her quest she chooses those aspects of herself which Paul embodies, for as he himself notices, he, too, is her double:

we are alike – there is affinity. Do you see it, mademoiselle,
when you look in the glass? Do you observe that your forehead
is shaped like mine – that your eyes are cut like mine? Do you
hear that you have some of my tones of voice? Do you know that
you have many of my looks? I perceive all this and believe that you
were born under my star! [. . .] Tremble! For where that is the case
with mortals, the threads of their destinies are difficult to disentangle;

knottings and catchings occur – sudden breaks leave damage in the web [. . .]. (457; ch. 31)

From the very first, he is the “arbiter of [her] destiny” (129; ch. 7); he reads her face and finds her adequate. He sees in her physiognomy, long before she and the reader know her true identity, her “passionate ardour for triumph”(226; ch. 15), her “wicked fondness for worldly vanities” (420; ch. 28). As she evolves into consciousness, and the reader into an awareness of the allegorical text, Paul’s censure comes to signify the nature of her quest and urges her on to achieve that end: “You are not cast in an heroic mould; your courage will not avail to sustain you in solitude” (280; ch. 19). He accuses her of false vanity, of fearing failure and “feign[ing] a false incapacity” (440; ch. 30), while instead suggesting that she is a “woman of intellect” (443; ch. 30), of masculine strength of spirit. He pierces the protective armour encasing her soul: “You seem sad, submissive, dreamy, but you aren’t really; it is I that say this to you: Savage! with a blazing soul and light in your eyes!” (translated from the French) (404; ch. 27). Finally, in a fervent declaration, she asserts her identity and proclaims herself a passionate, vibrant being: “Yes I have a blazing soul and the right to have one!” (404; ch. 27)

The combat between them continues until Lucy finds her voice. Fletcher’s idea of the verbal battle as an “allegorical action” and the conflict as “ironical” rather than physical (157-58) is germane to the war of words between Lucy and Paul: the combatants make antithetical claims with equal force and persistence, although the ironic meaning seems to be weighted on Lucy’s side of the argument.

Both she and the reader think her in the right until the allegorical narrative is fully revealed: the reader believes and sympathizes with her story, while feeling amused by or indignant about his claims. Lucy and the reader conclude that like all the other characters, Paul has misread her:

Miss Fanshawe there regards you as a second Diogenes.

M. de Bassompierre, the other day, politely turned the conversation when it ran on the wild gifts of the actress Vashti, because, as he kindly said, "Miss Snowe looked uncomfortable."

Dr. John Bretton knows you only as "quiet Lucy" -- "a creature inoffensive as a shadow"; [. . .] and behold! there starts up a little man, differing diametrically from all these, roundly charging you with being too airy and cheery -- too volatile and versatile -- too flowery and coloury. This harsh little man -- this pitiless censor -- gathers up all your poor scattered sins of vanity, your luckless chiffon of rose colour, your small fringe of a wreath, your small scrap of a ribbon, your silly bit of lace, and calls you to account for the lot, and for each item. (421; ch. 28)

In the battle between Lucy and Paul Emanuel, "M. Emanuel [is] like Bonaparte"; he mercilessly engages her sins of "Vanity," "Pride," and "Falsehood" in their "subtlest forms" and in the deepest recesses of her soul. But as the battle continues, as the verbal exchanges are repeated and the combatants more engaged, as Lucy becomes more conscious, Paul demands authenticity: "Prove yourself true ere I cherish you was his ordinance; and how difficult he made that

proof! What thorns and briars, what flints, he strewed in the path of feet not inured to rough travel!" (438; ch. 30) The allegorical text begins to unravel as the reader and Lucy become aware that Paul reads her correctly, that, in fact, Paulina, Ginevra, and John Bretton are those "[subtle] forms" of Lucy's sins. Irene Taylor perceptively cites St. Paul's distinction, and the one Lucy must make, "between the letter and the spirit," between "the children of flesh and the children of promise," between "the 'carnally minded,' which is death, and the 'spiritually minded,' which is life and peace" (275). As Lucy drops the mantle of custom, as her armor begins to crack, she apprehends a deeper truth than she has known: that in losing the battle and surrendering her claims, she gains equality and wins the world.

Her growing selfhood culminates in a night of revelation. Having been given a sleeping potion, Lucy, in a drug-induced state, escapes the prison of the convent school to join the throng moving by carriage or foot toward the park. For the citizens of Villette, the festival honors an historical memory more apocryphal than real, while for Lucy the visionary burst of sound, sight, and color marks her release from her inauthentic history and her arrival at a true understanding of her spiritual history. Again at midnight, she sees before her the daemonic representations of her own psychic drama. Referring to her new power, Mary Jacobus notes that she is no longer the "excluded spectator, but the '*metteur en scène*' in a drama of her own making" (52). She briefly brings each daemon onto the stage, reviewing the place she has given each in her life: M. de Bassompierre

“did not well know *me*, but I knew *him*” (554; ch. 38); “Graham’s thoughts of me were not entirely those of a frozen indifference, after all.” “I kept a place for him, too [. . .]. All my life long I carried it folded in the hollow of my hand – yet released from that hold and constriction, I know not but its innate capacity for expanse might have magnified into a tabernacle for a host” (555; ch. 38); Paulina sat “within reach of my hand [. . .],” “a figure like a fairy queen” (553; ch. 38). Still Lucy has one more part of her journey to take. When Paul Emanuel appears, “Love, Hope and Self-esteem, like clouds depart,” for Lucy has not yet sifted out “truth” from “Fact,” appearance and “Fancy” suggesting to her that he loves another. Yet she defines her love for him as Shelley defines the love which “gives grace and truth to life’s unquiet dream,” as intellectual, not erotic love, as a love

venturing diffidently into life after long acquaintance, furnace-trying by pain, stamped by constancy, consolidated by affection’s pure and durable alloy, submitted by intellect to intellect’s own tests, and finally wrought up, by his own process, to his own unflawed completeness, this Love that laughed at Passion, his fast frenzies and his hot and hurried extinction, in this Love I had a vested interest. (567; ch.38)

With that affirmation comes recognition. Her allegorical quest is nearing its end. Upon returning to her room after her revelatory experience, Lucy becomes aware that the phantom nun who has haunted her since her arrival at Villette, and is now stretched out on her bed, is merely a human construction, an empty habit in a human form laid out on her bed. At that moment both the

supernatural figure and the allegorical projection¹⁷ Lucy has created collapse. The true “revelation [has] come,” and she is free even before the *dénouement*, when Paul, announcing his love for her, lifts the final veil. She understands, at once, when she “[rushes] on the haunted couch” and “nothing [leaps] out or [springs] or [stirs],” that

all the movement was mine, so was all the life, the reality the
substance, the force; as my instinct felt. I tore her up -- the incubus!
I held her on high -- the goblin! I shook her loose -- the mystery! And
down she fell -- down all round me -- down in shreds and fragments --
and I trode upon her. (569; ch. 39)

The supernatural figure gone, Paulina and her father gone, John Bretton and his mother gone, Ginevra gone: she has used them “as guides through the chaos,” but, finished with them now, they seem to recede naturally from the surface of the text, from present time, and into the recesses of Lucy’s psyche. Only Paul remains, for it is through Paul that that she will find her true place and be restored.

In fact, place, like character, has had an allegorical dimension in the novel, which begins in the home of the Brettons of Bretton. As the narrator informs us, whatever connection exists between the family name and the ancient town of their birth has been trivialized and forgotten in present time. The past is further attenuated by Mrs. Bretton’s reconstruction of their English home in Belgium, that move from England to Belgium, in literary terms, as has been noted, alluding to the dual history of romance, but, in realistic terms, to the loss of place and

historical coherence in modern culture. The Bretton family, like Lucy, the Homes, and Ginevra Fanshawe, all dispossessed in one way or another, are severed from their physical, cultural, and spiritual origins, their capacities inevitably diminished by that loss. Mrs. Bretton is Lucy's godmother, and the only mother Lucy has, but her traditional role as spiritual guide and teacher has been trivialized and forgotten too. A middle-class woman of limited imagination, she is, no less than Graham, a casual and finally careless friend to Lucy. On more than one occasion, she has failed to understand Lucy's suffering and heedlessly abandoned her in utmost need. For all of these reasons, Lucy considers the Bretton house, despite its ancient history, a transient place, for a time a safe haven "[resembling] the sojourn of Christian and Hopeful beside a certain pleasant stream" (62; ch. 1), but not the sacred center that she and Paul will create at the end of her quest.

The home that Paulina and Mr. Home offer her in the role of companion to Paulina is "no true home"(450; ch. 31) either: "Rather than be a companion, I would have made shirts, and starved. I was no bright lady's shadow" (382; ch. 26), she insists, and indeed her intention throughout has been to step into the light. That intention is made manifest by the presence of several symbolically significant spaces marking the sacred nature of her journey, and serving as beacons to illuminate her way and guide her home. The garden behind the house at the Rue Fossette is a kind of paradise set apart from the school and its harsh realities. Here, she can be alone and unconstrained; here, she can meditate and speak to the hidden part of herself; here, as St. Teresa, she makes of her soul "a garden in which the Lord is to take his delight" (St. Teresa 127) and of

herself a gardener, creating a new beginning, planting the seeds of new life, “clearing away relics of past autumns” (174; ch. 12). Much is revealed about John Bretton when he enters her sacred garden, “trampling flowers and breaking branches,” and about Paul Emanuel, who like Lucy and St. Teresa, tends and nurtures the garden just as he watches over Lucy’s soul.

Finally, on the night of Revelation, the natural garden is transformed into a transcendent vision of the New Jerusalem, into “a garden most gorgeous, a plain sprinkled with coloured meteors, a forest with sparks of purple and ruby and golden fire gemming the foliage” (550; ch. 38). Nature made sacred is no “region of trees and shadows,” but a space consecrated by the religious and aesthetic symbols of ancient history, by the “strangest architectural wealth of altar and temple, of pyramid, obelisk and sphynx; incredible to say, the wonders and symbols of Egypt [. . .]” (550; ch. 38).

The erection of an architectural form to embody and designate the completion of a sacred quest has its source in archaic religions, including those specified in the Judaeo-Christian testaments, the most pertinent example in the New Testament, the founding of the Holy Church by St. Peter and St. Paul after the death of Christ. Eliade defines the sacred temple as a “strong significant space” which “ontologically founds the world”:

In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, in which no point of reference is possible and hence no orientation can be established, the heirophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a center. (21)

St. Teresa founds a convent and Lucy Snowe a school to mark and sanctify the

end of their spiritual quests and to create the sacred “Center of the World.” Lucy stands as “the Light” illuminating the soul and revealing God’s presence, as well as the virgin bride of Paul Emanuel, the avatar of the Apostle Paul, “God with us,” and the Holy Church, founded by Paul and built and embodied by Lucy as “the bride, the wife of the Lamb” and the Church spoken of in Revelation.

In *Villette*’s “displaced narrative” Lucy Snowe is written as an impoverished, unprotected orphan and “spinster” in an age when women in general, and such women in particular, had little status and little possibility of being independent in the world. The newly established school stands as the culmination of Lucy’s expressed goal of independence, and, as the means to this end, becomes her home and haven in the world. However, in the “undisplaced narrative,” Lucy’s pursuit of independence is a quest for eternal truth and the spiritual freedom she eventually finds. The school signifies the completion of her sacred quest and becomes the emblem of her “Renovation,” the sanctuary and spiritual home – the church – where she will practice her “stewardship,” and at Emanuel’s “coming” “render a good account” (Luke 16.2).

At novel’s end, it is suggested but never affirmed that Paul Emanuel’s death has left Lucy alone once more. She leaves the reader with this uncertainty by revealing the facts about the wreck of Paul’s ship and his likely drowning, while suggesting the possibility that he may have survived. Many critics have considered the inconclusive ending a flaw in the novel, explaining it autobiographically as a reflection of Brontë’s own life, psychologically as a defense against memory (Carlisle), or in Feminist terms as an indication of Lucy’s

female autonomy. However, her description of these events reveal other motives for leaving the reader in such an ambiguous state, for in so doing she ends her narrative by announcing she is an “artist,” not a “chronicler, that her autobiography is an aesthetic artifact, and that she, the author or maker, has created a world according to her own aesthetic and visionary imperative.

Explicating her language reveals, in addition, the sacred nature of Paul Emanuel’s disappearance, her words telling of transcendence, rebirth, “union and a happy succeeding life”:

There is enough said. Trouble no quiet, kind heart; leaven
sunny imaginations hope. Let it be theirs to conceive the delight
of joy born again fresh out of great terror, the rapture of rescue from
peril, the wondrous reprieve from dread, the fruition of return.

(596; ch. 42)

With these words, she makes clear that Paul, like the other characters in the novel, must vanish from the text, and she live alone in the world she has created. According to the logic of this allegorical reading, the death of Paul Emanuel, the symbolic Christ, must remain a mystery, while his spirit lives on to inspire the possibility of vocation, of poetry, and a redeemed life.

Chapter 2: THE ALLEGORY OF POWER IN *THE PROFESSOR*

Present-day critics tend to couple *The Professor*, Charlotte Brontë's first novel, with her juvenilia, claiming them to be equally undeveloped and mannered examples of novice writing. At best, they argue, these works introduce themes of subsequent novels in embryonic form and provide the criterion for tracking Brontë's evolution into the mature and skillful author of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, and they concede that the years between the completion of *The Professor*, in 1846, and *Villette*, in 1853, did allow Brontë to deal more adeptly and comprehensively with the same material in her last novel as in her first. But it is important to add that the span of time and qualitative difference of experience between 1839, when she wrote "The Last of Angria," and 1846, when she wrote *The Professor*, had already "crucially" influenced and advanced her artistic and intellectual growth. (Dessner 215) For two of those intervening years, she studied in Brussels under the tutelage of the brilliant and charismatic Constantin Heger, whose guidance expanded her intellectual resources and focussed her artistic methods. His influence and her growth are minutely detailed in the body of Brontë's student-essays, annotated by Heger and compiled by Sue Lonoff in *The Belgian Essays*. Lonoff argues in her introduction that "[Brontë's] exposure to new concepts, to critical analysis, to literature"(xiv) resulted in new rigor in her imagery, a new capacity for reflection and control over her texts, and, in general, great gains in her formal development. During this watershed period, "she seems to have pieced every scrap of her experience into the fabric of her fiction.

Characters, episodes, methods of instruction, allusions to the reading and to cultural events gave her matter for all four of her novels” (lxix).

We can reasonably assume, then, that the temper of her culture significantly determined Brontë’s focus on the acquisition and practice of power as the social, psychological, and economic force propelling the world she describes, sets out to transform and symbolically redeem in *The Professor*. As noted in the introduction to this study, the spiritual vacuum left in the wake of a changing world view informs all of Brontë’s novels, but in *The Professor*, as in *Shirley*, Brontë overtly articulates the causes and effects of what she experienced as a growing spiritual and existential crisis. The static and systematically organized power which had been created by feudal structures of class, economics, community, and religion was being replaced by the seemingly amorphous power of a rising bourgeoisie, expanding industry and wealth, and a secular ethos characterized by materialistic values and unfettered individualism. As it became possible for energetic and ambitious men to accumulate wealth and move from one class to another, their hard-won power became a signifier for superior strength and will, and was worshipped by many as a moral good and end in itself. Material power became the new religion, with the machine, money, and the accoutrements of money its sacred vessels.

While these larger philosophical imperatives informed the subject of this, her first novel, Brontë may have been more immediately influenced by the circumstances of her private life: by her early sense of helplessness proceeding

from the death of her mother and two sisters, but also from a quite different aspect of her family experience in a close and insular community of siblings, whose shared interests, sympathetic imaginations, and collaborative efforts were the fundamental realities shaping her identity. Living apart from her family in the menial position of governess, she describes her sense of loss and alienation in a letter to Reverend Henry Nussey:

my home [. . .] contains what I shall find nowhere else in the world -- the profound and intense affection which brothers and sisters feel for each other when their minds are cast in the same mould, their ideas drawn from the same source -- when they have clung to each other from childhood and when family disputes have never sprung up to divide them. (9 May 1841)

The contrast between a familial society informed by mutuality and equality and a Victorian society founded on the ideology of power apparently made a strong and conflictful impression on Brontë's consciousness.¹⁸ In the novels, she creates negative and positive polarities to articulate that contrast: in *Jane Eyre*, in her characterization of Mr. Brocklehurst and the Reeds as sadistic and tyrannical representations of the Victorian embrace of power, on the one hand; and in the characterization of Helen Burns and Maria Temple as Jane's gentle and compassionate surrogate sisters and Diana and Mary Rivers as her cousins, equals, and spiritual sisters, on the other; in *Shirley*, in the rigidly hierarchical relationship between the governess Mrs. Pryor and her employers, and the mill

workers and theirs, versus the sisterly relationship between Caroline Helstone and Shirley Keeldar, the novel's protagonists; and in *Villette*, in power as it is practiced by class interests, the Catholic church, and educational institutions versus the consistently loving relationships between Mrs. Bretton and her son, Mr. Home and his daughter, John Bretton and Polly Home, and Lucy Snowe and Paul Emanuel.

All of these novels examine the idea of power, but *The Professor*, a more rudimentary novel than these, does so within the context of the structural and perceptual changes taking place in Victorian culture in a more transparent form and with a narrower and more exclusive focus. With the objective of looking through that narrow lens, this discussion takes two approaches to Brontë's allegorical study of power: the first, to explore the novel's characters as incarnations of economic, cultural, and/or political power as they were practiced during the Victorian period; the second to consider the ways that power is absorbed and exercised by the subjugated being, whose interior reality, according to Michel Foucault's analysis, is shaped by the practices of external power.

Foucault postulates that each "made-subject" is created by a ritualized web of power relations providing, as Judith Butler notes, "the very condition of [the subject's] existence and the trajectory of its desire" (2). His claim will serve as the point of departure here for inquiring into the ways Brontë allegorizes the concept of power: in the forms of class, business, and institutional practices; and as a force which consciously, unconsciously, and habitually wielded, organizes and subdues individual identity, behavior, and desire. In spite of the narrator's passivity, his

own entanglement in the strategy and exercise of power will be considered as both a learned response to external power and, as Dreyfus' and Rabinow's study of Foucault indicates, a "conscious decision-making, [a] planning, plotting, and coordination of political activity" (187). Finally, a case will be made that Brontë responds to and transforms these active and reactive forms of power by investing the character of Frances Henri, the novel's heroine, with the same mythic power she invests in the characters of Paul Emanuel and Lucy Snowe. In *The Professor*, *Villette*, and, as we shall see, in *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*, Brontë incorporates myth into realistic narrative. She does so to transform desire and to recreate and repossess the unity, order, and generative potential of the symbolic past.

The allegorization of power as a subjugating and dehumanizing force, combined with what most readers consider a mechanical and over-intellectualized narrative, give the reader of *The Professor* the sense of being lost in an alienated, highly constricted, and terrifying world, where power is everything and natural feeling must be repressed for the sake of survival. The sense of constriction is reinforced by the novel's allegorical structure, which adds a formal as well as a substantive element of power to the narrative. Power relations, according to Foucault, are "intentional and nonsubjective" (*History of Sexuality* 95); "their intelligibility derives from this intentionality" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 187). Similarly, by the very nature of allegory, and, specifically, in this, Brontë's most overdetermined novel, the thinly disguised allegorical characters are "imbued"

“with calculation” (HS 95) and narrowly bound by the intellectual concepts they embody.

While Helene Moglen acknowledges *The Professor* as allegory, albeit an unsuccessful one, she attributes the novel’s mechanistic quality to its unconvincingly male or androgynous hero, its “curiously flattened and dispassionate” characters, and its lack of “psychological perspective.” Not many would disagree with these specific criticisms; however, a case can also be made that the very absence of highly developed psychological and emotional detail serves to differentiate the novel’s allegorical machinery from its realistic narrative by bringing to the surface the abstract idea at the core.

The language of power also adds a constricted and oppressive sense to the text. In the first five chapters, describing the novel’s most power-driven relationship between William and Edward Crimsworth, the density of words and images signifying power is especially apparent. Words such as “underling,” “inferior,” “superior,” “ruthless,” “slave,” “master,” “vicious,” “despotism,” “tyranny,” “force,” “power,” “submission,” “resistance” are frequently repeated. Whenever Edward is thwarted in any way, “he takes revenge” (52; ch. 2); Edward “assumes” toward William “the bearing of a proud taskmaster” (53; ch. 2), while William describes his position in Edward’s service as “the most nauseous slavery under the sun” (73; ch. 5). Edward has “brute” power, the power of a “lion,” “powerful proportions,” “the bearing of a proud, harsh master,” “the presence of a taskmaster”; William is treated like a “dog,” a “flunkey,” a “poor shabby hanger on.”

Pointing to the images of power and battle throughout the novel, Heather Glen claims that “even supposedly non-hostile encounters are portrayed in terms of opposition and combat” (14). For example, she notes Brontë’s use of battle imagery to describe the “barely suppressed violence” and “struggle for power” in the playful chiding between Edward and his wife, in William’s sexual aggression towards Frances Henri, and in the signs of contention between William and his son. Teaching is also described as a battle: “the task of the teacher is not to respond to her pupils, but ‘to enter into conflict with this foreign will to endeavour to bend it into subjection to her own’” (Glen 14). With equal force, the students assert their power as a body, “for though not brave singly, they [are] relentless acting *en masse*.” As noted in the chapter on *Villette*, the daemonic idea in the latter example, the will and the force of the crowd, is a feature characteristic of allegory, and the static, repetitive, symmetrical “conflict of ideas and ideals” (2), here between William and other characters, an allegorical paradigm (Fletcher 157). In *The Professor*, one side may lose and another may win power in any single instance of aggression, but there is never any vital transformation in the idea, forms, and forces of power, which even at the conclusion of the novel seem rigidly and permanently embedded in the culture and in the relationships between characters.

The subject and language of power, the ritualized forms of battle, and the tone of anxiety and darkness make *The Professor* seem the most modern and paradoxically the most complex of Brontë’s novels, an impression having less to

do with its relationship to *Pilgrim's Progress*, the most obvious source, than its affinities with the twentieth century allegories of Franz Kafka and George Orwell. Brontë's world, like theirs, is characterized by manipulation, surveillance, suppression, and brutality in one guise or another, and in the works of all three authors, the protagonists are nearly overwhelmed by these subjugating practices and in extreme danger of losing their identities.

Perhaps because of its modernity and because its subject, form, and tone were misunderstood, *The Professor* was no more appreciated in Brontë's time than it has been in ours, and, in fact, it was only through the efforts of Elizabeth Gaskell that it was published posthumously in 1857. One problem for contemporary critics has been Brontë's preface to the novel¹⁹ stating that she had intended to write a "plain and homely" narrative. Given the literal implications of her words, it is not surprising that critical focus has been mainly on psychological, autobiographical, and/or gender-based realism, or that such a focus has led critics to dismiss *The Professor* as amateurish, contrived, "a more dishonest and idealized version of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*" (Eagleton 34), and the most Victorian, and therefore the most dated, of all her novels. (Burkhart 54)

Notwithstanding Brontë's preface stating that she had intended to follow principles of realism in *The Professor*, her language needs to be examined further for its connotative, contextual, and intertextual, implications and the totality of its meaning. Glen correctly interprets her statement to mean, at one level, that she intended to write a fictional version of "the exemplary biography of the self-made

man" (10), but stops short of explicating Brontë's words to determine everything that her commitment to "the real" may entail. One thing is certain: Brontë means to explain and defend a novel which she believes has been misunderstood, and to that end, defines her terms by calling attention to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and describing her hero's journey in the language of mastery and quest -- "he should master at least half the ascent of 'the Hill of Difficulty.'"

Her allusion to the quest structure in seventeenth century Christian allegory is a common one in the nineteenth century. However, as a clarification of her intention in this novel, both the allusion and the language in the preface suggest the novel's focus on "mastery" as a visionary objective, its allegorical articulation of that objective throughout the literal narrative, and its exposition of "the real" as both the condition of "Adam's doom" and the embodiment of his living spirit. As noted in the introduction, Brontë defines the quest in all of her novels as Adolf Nauman, the German artist in *Middlemarch*, defines his quest for the ideal in the real. In Dorothea Brooke, George Eliot's secular St. Teresa, he envisions "beauty in its breathing life, with the consciousness of Christian centuries in its bosom." Similarly, in *The Professor*, William Crimsworth's struggle for mastery in the world is realized in his love for Frances Henri, whose character, like Dorothea Brooke's, carries the novel's moral and spiritual signification. Interpreting the novel this way makes it clear that the narrative is cast on a more transcendental ground and is informed by a more idealistic vision than the pragmatic values of the *Self-Help* tradition, as Glen defines it,²⁰ would allow.

Recognizing that her publishers would, in fact, have preferred this novel to be “something more imaginative and poetical” than “real,” Brontë explains their notion of those terms according to Coleridge’s definition of “Fancy,” which, he says, “has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites.” The publishers would have preferred something more mechanical, she claims, “something more consonant with a highly wrought fancy, with a taste for pathos, with sentiments more tender, elevated, unworldly.” But for Brontë the imagination is “primary,” in Coleridgean terms, “a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation” vol. I, ch. 13; 304), and, as she ultimately reveals in *Villette*, she considers the imagination and the real reciprocal states of being. Each qualifies the other, and together they define a cognitive state that is more lasting and true than “the wild, wonderful, and thrilling” emotionalizing of fancy or the false sentimentalizing of romance, more abstract, comprehensive, and poetic than the cause and effect system of psychological realism. In her letter to George Henry Lewes, Brontë rejects Jane Austen’s social comedy as her model of realism. Referring to Austen, she rhetorically asks, “Can there be a great Artist without poetry?”

by poetry I am sure you understand something different to what I do [. . .]. It is poetry, as I comprehend the word which elevates that masculine George Sand, and makes out of something coarse, something godlike. [. . .] Miss Austen, being as you say without “sentiment,” without poetry, may be -- is sensible, real (more real than true) but she cannot be great. (18 January 1848)

And in an earlier letter to Lewes, she describes *Pride and Prejudice* as “an accurate daguerreotyped portrait of a commonplace face [. . .] with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of a bright vivid physiognomy – no open country – no fresh air – no blue hill – no bonny beck. I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses” (12 January 1848), she says, her response leaving no doubt that the “influence” which “seems to waken in [her], which becomes [her] master,” runs counter to Austen’s “accurate” and “subdued” model.

Because she is a Victorian – and surely because of the painful circumstances of her private life – Brontë’s vision has a darker cast and a more transcendent purpose than Austen’s vision of a small, generally privileged section of eighteenth century English society. Brontë intimates as much in a passage describing the response of *The Professor’s* narrator, William Crimsworth, to the ordinary Belgian landscape. Informed by the strength of his thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, the landscape is transformed from “flat, cultivated” fields, from “magnified kitchen gardens,” into something “more than picturesque,” into “all” that was “beautiful.” He describes his actual journey through that landscape in the religious language of quest, moving from a metaphorical birth, to ascent along a rugged and uneven path, to ultimate redemption:

Yes, at that epoch I felt like a morning traveller who doubts not
that from the hill he is ascending he shall behold a glorious sunrise;
what if the track be strait, steep and stony? he sees it not; his eyes

are fixed on that summit, flushed already, flushed and gilded, and having gained it he is certain of the scene beyond. He knows that the sun will face him, that his chariot is even now coming over the eastern horizon, and that the herald breeze he feels on his cheek is opening for the god's career a clear, vast path of azure amidst clouds soft as pearl and warm as flame. Difficulty and toil were to be my lot, but sustained by energy, drawn on by hopes as bright as vague, I deemed such a lot no hardship. I mounted now the hill in shade; there were pebbles, inequalities, briars in my path, but my eyes were fixed on the crimson peak above; my imagination was with the refulgent firmament beyond, and I thought nothing of the stones turning under my feet, or of the thorns scratching my face and hands. (87; ch. 7)

William's character is defined by his quest for internal and worldly power, but as he is required through most of the novel to struggle for survival, he attempts to navigate the pitfalls of a dehumanized world by cultivating "Caution, Tact [and] Observation" to protect him from the "prowling and prying of [his brother's] malignity," the many unwelcome intrusions by Hunsden Yorke Hunsden into his private life, the "talebearing" and "backbiting" of his students, and the surveillance tactics of Middle Reuter. He begins his journey as a clerk in his brother's counting house, where he becomes aware that he must be ever wary of external danger, that necessity rendering his existence tantamount to living in a primal world or a police state:

[Edward's malignity] could never baffle the lynx eyes of these,
 my natural sentinels. Day by day did his malice watch my tact
 hoping it would sleep, and prepared to steal snake-like on its
 slumber; but tact, if it be genuine, never sleeps. (63; ch. 4)

In choosing to enter his brother's employ, William has rejected another kind of tyranny, the patronage of his aristocratic uncles, and moved from the medieval to the modern world. Through this choice and his refusals to enter the church and to marry within his class, both avenues traditionally open to the aristocratic male, Brontë highlights the waning power of the aristocracy and the emergence of an increasingly powerful middle-class. William's letter to Charles, an old school acquaintance, dismissively, swiftly, and completely summarizes the events leading to his departure from his ancestral home, and with an abrupt cessation of the epistolary narrative, that world recedes into the background as Brontë and the narrator seem to leave the past behind. However, as we discover later in the novel, Brontë retains what is of value in the historical past by recreating it in symbolic form: in the form of a painting of William's dead aristocratic mother, who represents the best in William's past and in his nature; and in the character of Frances Henri, William's mother transformed into a modern-day saint, a nun, a teacher, and a true aristocrat of the spirit and the imagination, who at the appropriate time will lead William into the light.

Inevitably, however, a tension between the past and the present remains, illustrated by the contrast between William and Edward Crimsworth, both brothers the products of their divided family, divided themselves, and divided

from each and all others. In her brief reference to their histories, Brontë accounts for Edward's aggression against William, for their individual psychologies, and for their symbolic significance in the novel: Edward has been raised by the commercial side and William by the aristocratic side of their family. Feeling resentful and jealous of William's status, Edward exercises his power in order to subjugate and destroy him and, by virtue of his defeat, to strike out at the privileged class he represents.

The specifics of Edward's psychological motivation, however, are less important to the novel than his single narrative function as the incarnation of sheer, unadulterated power. As a purely allegorical character, he serves to illuminate the primal savagery residing in a more mediated form in some, and less in other, characters. He exemplifies William Houghton's description of Victorian admiration for "the power of machines, and of the men who make them and run them; for the healthy, vigorous body; for the combative and even belligerent temper with its refusal to recognize defeat or mistakes, and its useful assumption that those it dislikes are knaves or weaklings" (198). Brontë describes him as a perfectly-made "animal," a strong, handsome brute whose domination of his horse symbolizes his hunger for power and his own bestial nature: "a vigorous and determined application of the whip from the ruthless hand of his master soon compelled [the horse] into submission, and Edward's dilated nostril expressed his triumph in the result of the contest" (50; ch. 2).

Having been educated in business by his merchant father, Edward becomes one of the new class of industrial capitalists, driven by their fixation on power and

wealth above any human, cultural, or spiritual imperative. Through the management of his mill, he attempts to dominate nature, and through this incursion into the natural world, negate the values of the past: “Steam, trade, machinery had long since banished from [the country] all romance and seclusion” (48; ch. 2). Edward’s employment practices and the mill as it is organized are consonant with what Terry Eagleton describes as the “callous disciplines of early industrial capitalism, which uproot whole communities, convert human life into wage-slavery, enforce an alienating labor-process on the newly formed working class, and understand nothing which cannot be transformed into a commodity on the open market” (*Literary Theory* 19). The mill encroaches on the countryside, disfiguring the landscape, “vomiting soot from its long chimney and quivering through its thick brick walls with the commotion of its iron bowels” (50; ch. 2), and in contrast to the luxury of Crimsworth Hall, the counting house attached to the mill is designed on the factory model, to be utilitarian without a modicum of comfort, privacy, or human dignity. The workers, who have been forced by economic necessity from their more natural agrarian environment into the mill, are described by Brontë as nameless, faceless automatons, their heads bent in subservience, their movements organized and timed by the sound of a bell, their tasks repetitive, their surroundings oppressive. In Edward Crimsworth, they have a “hard, grinding master,” “an inexorable tyrant” (63; ch. 4) who consciously enjoys his capacity to dominate and subdue.

The antipathy between the brothers reflects the symbiosis and heightened conflict in the nineteenth century between the aristocratic and the monied classes.

In the former, the need is for money, and in the latter, for respectability and status. On Edward's part, William is the enemy because he has been educated according to the standards of his aristocratic class, while Edward has been trained by the demands of material necessity. Seeking revenge for past and present inequities, Edward takes advantage of William's position as a mere clerk in his employ and negates the importance of his education and intellectual power. He asks, "Do you know anything besides that useless trash of college learning -- Greek, Latin, and so forth?" (51; ch. 2). William competes by claiming his own superiority: "Had I been in anything inferior to him, he would not have hated me so thoroughly, but I knew all that he knew and what was worse he suspected I kept the padlock of silence on mental wealth in which he was no sharer" (62; ch. 4).

In order to destroy the power of their mother's aristocratic family, Edward insists that William break his ties with them completely and submit entirely to his authority, for as he says "no man can serve two masters" (44; ch.1). He treats William as if he were "a block, or a piece of furniture," an idea in his head rather than "an acting, thinking sentient man" (57; ch. 3), and attempts, in effect, to murder William by denying him his humanity, his freedom, and his soul. Whatever equality typically exists between brothers, in their case, gives way to a master-slave relationship:

I shall excuse you nothing on the plea of being my brother; if I find you stupid, negligent, dissipated, idle, or possessed of any faults detrimental to the interests of the house, I shall dismiss you

as I would any other clerk. [. . .] remember, too, that things are on a practical footing in my establishment -- business-like habits, feelings, and ideas, suit me best. (51; ch. 1)

Retrospectively, it is clear that William's passive-aggressive response to Edward's domination echoes his earlier response to his schoolmate, Charles, referred to above. Brontë uses William's letter to Charles to communicate certain facts about William, allowing her, in the novel's opening chapter, to concisely and subtly reveal his enduring sensitivity and competitive response to perceived rejection. Employing a metaphor of power, William describes their relationship in the language of mesmerism, as the inexplicable outcome of a magnetic force, outside themselves, which drew the two together more in contention than accord:

What animal magnetism drew thee and me together I know not; Certainly I never experienced anything of the Pylades and Orestes sentiment for you, and I have reason to believe that you, on your part, were equally free from all romantic regard to me. Still out of school hours we walked and talked continually together; when the theme of conversation was our companions or our masters we understood each other, and when I recurred to some sentiment of affection, some vague love of an excellent or beautiful object, whether in animate or inanimate nature, your sardonic coldness did not move me. I felt myself superior to that check *then* as I do *now*. (39; ch. 1)

William's response to Charles is telling, because it suggests that their relationship was formed by the experience and practice of power, in the case of Charles, by a manifest discomfort leading to his "sardonic coldness" toward William and a seemingly stubborn refusal and negation of William's being; and in the case of William, by a passivity, vulnerability, sense of inferiority, and repressed anger transmuted into an aggressive sense of superiority and will.

The relationship between William and Edward is, of course, a more obvious and thorough exposition of the reciprocal practice of power by master and slave – each side, as in Foucault's analysis, engaged in the discourse of power, each side functioning as both master and slave. That Edward is William's master has been established here, but that Edward has been formed so utterly by the forces of history suggests he is also slave to that history. Furthermore, because he is driven solely by his obsession for power, he is reduced, in the last analysis, to a monster, depleted of every vestige of human emotion except rage. His own surrender to power and the ongoing intensity of his rage are reflected in his practices: in his business, towards his horse, his employees, his brother, and his wife, who is also in a subjugated position. More Edward's trophy than his equal, she responds as the beautiful coquette, the obedient child, or the mother; and yet we learn that when Edward's fortune has turned, she abandons him and returns to her father's home, where it can be speculated with some assurance that she continues to be the obedient child.

Because his character is more humanly drawn and therefore more complex than Edward's, William claims his superiority and participates in his own

enslavement more deviously than the constraints of Edward's strictly allegorical character will allow. He has responded to his uncles' snobbery and attempt to dominate his life by perversely choosing to work beneath his class and at a job for which he is not suited. And now, despite mechanical work and oppressive conditions, he remains in Edward's employ far longer than he should, claiming his stoic power to withstand abuse and boredom as evidence of his superior strength of character.

Both brothers implicated in the power struggle, their battle rages on and culminates in a final scene of utter animosity. Finding his voice, William confronts Edward, who, in response, threatens him with the whip he most likely used on his horse, while Edward's act of aggression is met with a reaction of self-defense -- William seizes and destroys the whip -- and appropriate aggression -- he threatens to call the magistrate and have him up on charges. Despite William's immediate victory, however, both sides win and lose in the struggle. Edward's power is stripped away for the moment and replaced by the greater power of the law, and he responds to William's threat, as William well knows "men like Crimsworth" do: "If firmly and calmly resisted [they] always abate something of their exorbitant insolence; he had no mind to be brought before a magistrate, and I suppose he saw I meant what I said" (75; ch. 5). But in Edward's mind, and realistically in terms of William's limited choices, William loses to a greater power as well, the power of money: "[Edward] seemed to bethink himself that, after all, his money gave him sufficient superiority over a beggar like me, and that he had in his hands a surer and more dignified mode of revenge than the somewhat

harzardous one of personal chastisement” (75; ch. 5). William is forcibly removed from Edward’s employ and relegated, from Edward’s point of view, to the status of abject victim:

Take your hat, said he. Take what belongs to you, and go out
 At that door; get away to your parish, you pauper: beg, steal,
 starve, get transported, do what you like; but at your peril
 venture again into my sight! If ever I hear of your setting foot
 on an inch of ground belonging to me, I’ll hire a man to cane you.
 (75; ch. 5)

Finally, on both sides the machinations of power become transparently inauthentic. At the mercy of Edward’s command, William’s response suggests a contrived air of nonchalance -- “I permitted myself to laugh with a degree of scorn I took no pains to temper or hide” -- and an equally false departure: “I took down my hat, drew on my gloves, and walked leisurely out of the counting house -- walked out of it to enter it no more” (76; ch. 5).

William is rescued from his brother’s tyranny by Hunsden Yorke Hunsden, a prosperous manufacturer and millowner, and the only living descendent of an old family in Bigben Close. Hunsden’s character reappears in altered form as Mr.Yorke in *Shirley*, but in both novels, Brontë describes him as the allusive, complicated, and poignant figure who embodies the cultural and spiritual duality of her time. Yet Charles Burkhart claims that Hunsden has no function in the novel, attributing that failure to Brontë’s inability at this stage of her work to detach her creations from the facts of her life. (50) He wonders about Hunsden’s

inconsistent representation, why if he is “designed as friendly mentor or companion to the hero, a Horatio type, still the imagery that accompanies him can be malignantly negative, like ‘devil’ or ‘viper’ or ‘hovering hawk’” (49). He cites Mrs. Humphrey Ward’s remark that Hunsden “puzzles us; and yet he is not mysterious. For that he is not human enough” (49). The remarks of both critics, however, suggest the answer to the puzzle. In overlooking the possibility that Hunsden’s narrative function may be allegorical, not realistic, they do not observe that his incoherence and lack of human dimension may have cogent symbolic meaning.

Divided in spirit and displaced by time, Hunsden is, in fact, more Hamlet than Horatio, as Brontë’s several references to Shakespeare’s tragic hero reveal, and more than any other character in the novel, the embodiment of the unstable, anxious, and lonely spirit of the Victorian age. He is a mass of tortured contradictions: his English lineage has ancient origins, yet he is a foreigner in temperament and aspect, and an outsider in his own mind; his presence gives the illusion of power, his physique is frail and effeminate; his manner is aggressive and confident, his core being is veiled, uncertain, and self-conscious.

I discerned that there would be contrasts between his inward and outward man; contentions too; for I suspected his soul had more of will and ambition than his body had of fibre and muscle. Perhaps in these incompatibilities of the “physique” with the “morale,” lay the secret of that fitful gloom; he *would* but *could* not, and the athletic mind scowled scorn on its more fragile companion. (67; ch. 4)

For every claim that Brontë makes to define Hunsden's character, she makes a counter claim which is equally valid. She positions him in the desolate space between past values and future ideals: between his superior social status and egalitarian beliefs, the imperatives of tradition and reform, the interests of business and class. On the one hand, she describes him as a traditionalist, his snobbish contempt for those beneath his social caste undermining his ideals and his capacity to break with the fading standards of the past; and on the other hand, she notes his hatred for aristocratic distinction and his disregard for convention by listing the "sundry modern authors" in his library, whose ideas, as Glen remarks, "reflect some of the paradoxes of his character" (295). These are French and German Romantics, like Schiller, who addresses the social and economic divisiveness of the age and the "self division" of civilized man (Abrams 210), and Goethe, who transforms that "self-division" into poetry.

Hunsden's character, an unmediated amalgam of Williams's passivity and Edward's aggression in a state of conflicted being, allows him to penetrate, identify, and confront William's defenses while concealing the truth about himself. He serves the same function for William that Paul Emanuel serves for Lucy Snowe, as the carrier of William's conscience and consciousness, the one who "sees right down into [the] heart" of his servitude and inauthenticity, and can point the way out of darkness, even if not into the light. It is he who first identifies the painting in Edward's possession of William's mother. He purchases it from Edward and in presenting it to William, gives it iconographic status as the source of William's "Creation," "Destiny," and "Quest" (Slochower 15). Hunsden

accuses William of being an automaton, reminding him that he actually has no power in Edward's employ: "you can do nothing; you're wrecked and stranded on the shores of commerce; forced into collision with practical men, with whom you cannot cope, for *you'll never be a tradesman*" (69; ch. 4). In speculating on William's motives, Hunsden exposes William's weakness and "goads [him] into rebellion against [his] oppressor":

if you are patient because you expect to make something eventually out of Crimsworth, notwithstanding his tyranny, or perhaps by means of it, you are what the world calls an interested and mercenary, but may be a very wise fellow; if you are patient because you think it a duty to meet insult with submission, you are an essential sap, and in no shape the man for my money; if you are patient because your nature is phlegmatic, flat, inexcitable, and that you cannot get up to the pitch of resistance, why, God made you to be crushed; and lie down by all means, and lie flat, and let Juggernaut ride well over you. (68; ch. 4)

His confrontation of William and his own character tell us something about the "inconsistency" and fragility "of man" in a world that is itself incoherent and insecure. Hunsden knows about William what Hunsden has only an intimation of in himself, that in order to survive in such a world, he too has constructed a false self "more desirous of making, than susceptible of receiving an impression":

his general bearing intimated complete, sovereign satisfaction with

himself; yet, at times, an indescribable shade passed like an eclipse over his countenance, and seemed to me like the sign of a sudden and strong inward doubt of himself, his words and actions – an energetic discontent at his life or his social position, his future prospects or his mental attainments – I know not which [. . .]. (61; ch. 3)

Yet he is painfully conscious of the absurdity of his own life, of William's life, and of a world where idealism, intellect, and imagination have no currency and no place. The question he asks about the efficacy of William's employment in Bigben Close sheds light on his general view of the modern world and his own dislocation in that world: "what good can your bumps of ideality, comparison, self esteem, conscientiousness, do you here?" (60; ch. 3)

As the narrative continues, the powerlessness, repression, and alienation of both characters become more evident, but William will ultimately find his home and identity in the world, while Hunsden will remain throughout an ephemeral being. His exchange with William's betrothed, Frances Henri, makes it clear that his pessimism and iconoclasm run wide and deep. He savagely rejects his native country as "a little corrupt, venal, lord-and-king-cursed nation, full of mucky pride [. . .] and helpless pauperism; rotten with abuses, worm-eaten with prejudices!" (24, 260); he rejects Frances Henri's Swiss countrymen as sensible mercenaries, who, he tells her, "make a marketable article of what to you is an abstract idea; they have, ere this, sold their social greatness and also their blood-earned freedom to be the servants of foreign kings" (263; ch. 4); and, it would seem, he rejects the larger world and existence itself as meaningless and unjust.

Responding to his tirade, Frances admonishes him for his cynicism and sophistry, and essentially accuses him of being a deluded ideologue, her confrontation, both in word and in substance, almost duplicating Shirley Keeldar's confrontation of Mr. Yorke in *Shirley*. It is not surprising in this more abstract novel, however, that there is in Hunsden's idiosyncratic character, and not in Yorke's more bourgeois character, the sense of a larger, deeper, more tragic meaning than the literal text reveals. Especially in their revelatory interchange, which comes at the *dénouement*, the very fact and insistence of his argument suggest a spirit more despairing than cynical, more conflicted than sophistic; a spirit torn between passionate idealism, the demands of material and psychological necessity, and the disappointing realities of the world as he perceives it. In the context of his interest in the French and German Romantics, his reply to Frances, in the manner of Polonius' response to Hamlet's words, reveals that there is both poetry and philosophy in his despair; "There [is]," as he says, "method in my madness" (263; ch. 24).

William is understandably bewildered by the inconsistency of Hunsden's response, by his disdain, on the one hand, and his many kindnesses, on the other; but he is equally divided between resenting Hunsden's arrogant and all-too-penetrating confrontations, wishing to impress and defeat him with his own superiority, and "half-liking" him for rescuing him from Edward's abuse. The knowledge that Hunsden has witnessed his humiliation makes him feel vulnerable and competitive in his presence even at their first meeting: "I had the conviction

that he could only regard me as a poor-spirited slave, wherefore I now went about to shun his presence and eschew his conversation" (58; ch. 3). Later William will speak of him as "very like" "the devil himself," and swear he will not "condescend to get out of his way, or to forge a smile or a cheerful word wherewith to avert his sarcasm" (220; ch. 22). In the taunting style of Lucy and Paul Emanuel, they engage in a battle of power, Hunsden scornfully excavating William's psyche for weaknesses, and William responding by doing the same to Hunsden, and answering his scorn with a version of his own:

Looking at him still more fixedly than I had yet done, I saw written in his eye and mien a resolution to arrogate to himself a freedom so unlimited, that it might often trench on the just liberty of his neighbours. I rapidly ran over these thoughts, and then I laughed a low and involuntary laugh, moved thereto by a slight inward revelation of the inconsistency of man. It was as though Hunsden had expected me to take with calm his incorrect and offensive surmises, his bitter and haughty taunts; and himself was chafed by a laugh scarce louder than a whisper. (69; ch. 4)

William will realize his final triumph over Hunsden during the encounter between Hunsden and Frances Henri. Reacting to William's boast about her charms just prior to their meeting, Hunsden, on his side, reveals the inconsistency of his principles, by asking "To what caste does she belong?" and William, on his, responds with pleasure, believing at this moment that he holds the advantage of integrity and, therefore, the high moral ground:

I smiled. Hunsden unconsciously laid stress on the word *caste*, and in fact, republican, lordhater as he was, Hunsden was as proud of his old –shire blood, of his descent and family standing, respectable and respected through long generations back, as any peer in the realm of his Norman race and Conquest-dated title.

Hunsden would as little have thought of taking a wife from a *caste* inferior to his own, as a Stanley would think of mating with a Cobden.
(257; ch. 24)

Without any wish for revenge, Shirley Keeldar similarly exposes Mr. Yorke in *Shirley* when he inadvertently expresses his inherent class consciousness: “Mr. Moore is a gentleman: his blood is pure and ancient as mine and thine”; and Shirley, responding ironically, makes it clear that she has seen through the falseness of his liberal position: “And we two set store by ancient blood? We have family pride, though one of us at least is a Republican?” (359; ch.21) In his own terse and reductive reply to Hunsden’s query, William, unlike Shirley, consciously and with smug satisfaction sets a trap for him and strategizes his ultimate victory:

I enjoyed the surprise I should give; I enjoyed the triumph of my practice over his theory; and leaning over the table and uttering the words slowly but with repressed glee, I said concisely -- “She is a lace-mender. (257; ch. 24)

William knows full well that Hunsden will confirm his victory by making assumptions about the lace-mender’s lack of education, fortune, and station, and

then after their meeting, and despite his preconceived “notions of good breeding,” by jealously acknowledging her distinction and William’s undeserving good fortune in winning her love:

What business have you to be suited so well with a partner? And She treats you with a sort of respect, too, and says, “Monsieur,” and modulates her tone in addressing you, actually, as if you were something superior. She could not evince more deference to such a one as I, were she favoured by fortune to the supreme extent of being my choice instead of yours. (267; ch. 24)

Just as Edward Crimsworth’s one-ideal character embodies the Victorian ideology of power in its most monolithic and narrowly focussed form, Hunsden’s divided character, more than any other, embodies the spiritual duality and dislocation of his time. Insisting on the ideal and chasing shadows without substance deprives him in the final analysis of any real “association” in the world, making of him “a mere comet, coming and going, no one knows how, when, where, or why [. . .]” (285; ch. 25). Tragically, he is rendered impotent by external and internal division, so that he can be neither an effective reformer, intellect, nor intimate. A lonely castrated figure, a man, Frances Henri claims, “who love[s] nothing” (263; ch. 24), he fully embodies, at novel’s end, the existential homelessness of his age. Without wife or family, he hovers, sometimes unwelcome, at the periphery of William’s family life, a surrogate father to William’s son, a husband only in fantasy to his “ideal bride,” whose miniature he carries in his pocket. The mere image of an actress he has most likely only seen

on stage, she is, for these reasons, doubly removed from reality, and for practical reasons as well, could never become his real wife because “les convenances” would not allow him to make that choice.

There is a lingering sense, finally, that both William and Hunsden will remain forever imprisoned by the practices of power, and that William’s own quest for power in a world that demands such a struggle has made him as intrinsically competitive with Hunsden as Hunsden has been with him. For example, with the best practical intent, but in a symbolic act of murderous aggression against Hunsden, William kills his son Victor’s beloved pet dog, given to him by Hunsden, and named Yorke by Victor in Hunsden’s honor:

[Victor] would go nowhere, do nothing without Yorke; Yorke lay at his feet while he learned his lessons, played with him in the garden, walked with him in the lane and wood, sat near his chair at meals, was fed always by his own hand, was the first thing he sought in the morning, the last he left at night. (287; ch. 25)

The child is heartbroken. He knows, despite all rational explanations that the dog was rabid, and despite his rationalization of the act, that for the first time he has been betrayed by the father he had trusted and loved. Immediately after the event he expresses his sense of betrayal:

O papa, I’ll never forgive you! [. . .]. You shot Yorke -- I saw it from the window. I never believed you could be so cruel -- I can love you no more! (287; ch 25)

At another time, when William is strolling with Hunsden and Frances, William's ideal and very real bride, he taunts Hunsden about his unrealized fantasy of the "ideal bride." After showing William the miniature portrait, Hunsden responds in kind -- "Don't you feel your little lamp of a spirit wax very pale beside such a *girandole* as Lucia's?" -- and in William's retort is evidence that the contest continues -- "My sight was always too weak to endure a blaze" (285; ch 25). Foucault's analysis of power is as germane to the relationship between William and Hunsden as it was to the relationship between William and Edward. William seems to have realized his goals at novels end, but the discourse of power continues between them, each one attempting to dominate and being dominated by the other, each one formed and driven by the "force relations" characteristic of their time and society.

Until he arrives at his final destination, and after he has left Edward's despotic employ, William continues to navigate his course in the world with focussed "Caution, Tact, and Observation," as the practices of institutional power take on a more artful yet equally intrusive form in the two Belgian schools where he finds employment as a professor of English and Latin. M. Pelet, the headmaster of the first school, seems, he says, an almost too gentle "contrast to my late master, Edward Crimsworth": "I [. . .] almost feared he could not be stern and resolute enough for a schoolmaster" (93; ch. 7). But on visiting the school, William recognizes the subtle signs of M. Pelet's authority in "the full, flourishing and well-disciplined seminary" he governs, and in the apprehensive hush that greets him when he walks among his pupils:

a profound silence reigned on all sides, and if by chance a murmur or a whisper arose, one glance from the pensive eye of this most gentle pedagogue stilled it instantly. It was astonishing, I thought, how so mild a check could prove so effectual. (93; ch. 7)

It is worth noting that Brontë, herself, may have encountered power in that subtle form at the Pensionnat Heger in Brussels in 1842, and certainly, as her biographers and her letters reveal, a harsher more oppressive form of power at Cowan's Bridge School for the daughters of impoverished clergymen in 1824, when she was eight. Indeed, she extrapolates from both experiences to fictionally depict the power practiced in these very different types of institution. For example, in *Jane Eyre*, she singles out a Calvinist school for poor orphaned girls to describe the excessive use of power in an establishment like Cowan's Bridge,²¹ while in *The Professor* she makes William a graduate of Eton, a British public school for gentlemen closer in status and character to the *pensionnat* for women she attended in Brussels.

As a male from a privileged class, William would, of course, be subject to a more discrete form of power than Jane Eyre or Brontë, but as the product of a nineteenth century Western European education, he would nevertheless be familiar with the discourse of power that M. Pelet and the politics of a prestigious Belgian school would require of him. He would know the place of the pupils, and in relation to them, his own place in the school's hierarchical system, which not

only “[epitomizes] the Belgian nation,” as William contemptuously states, but in the sense that he means, the British nation as well. It is an historic fact that Belgium was a foreign-dominated nation until 1830, while nineteenth century Britain was at the pinnacle of her vast colonial power. However, in the context of Foucault’s analysis of power, this very real historical contrast does not alter the structural reality that the populations and institutions of both the dominated and dominating nations would be thoroughly engaged in the discourse of power: both formed by power and participate in its strategies and practices.

From the start, the interchange between William and his pupils is a microcosm of that larger discourse. Each attempts to subjugate and is subjugated by the other, William, because he is a newcomer, a foreigner, and linguistically insufficient; his pupils, because, with the exception of the Flemish servants, they are the most powerless class in the institutional hierarchy. William knows the necessity of “[taking] up an advantageous position” over his pupils, of remaining aloof, exposing their weaknesses publicly, and playing on their insecurity and fear, while his pupils tease and badger him, and seek out every opportunity to create chaos and insurrection. To insure his survival in a system organized by power, he develops his own system of tyranny, “[offering] them but one alternative -- submission [. . .] or ignominious expulsion” (98; ch. 7). He becomes a “despot” like Edward, adopting his tactics of calculated control: “in less than five minutes I had buckled in a breastplate of steely indifference, and let down a visor of impassable austerity” (115; ch.10). “Happily, I felt in myself complete power to manage my pupils without aid” (117; ch. 10). In his most alienating and

alienated mode, William seems literally to become Edward, dehumanizing his subordinates as Edward did, by comparing them to animals: they would have resisted “arbitrary measures,” he says, as “obstinately, as clamorously, as desperate swine” (98; ch. 7). He describes the progress of one as “snail-like” (128; ch. 12); a second “swelled like an incensed turkey”; a third had “envy and panther-like deceit about her mouth” (129; ch. 12); and a fourth “made noises with her mouth like a horse” (130; ch. 10). Humiliating and nearly mesmerizing them, he subdues them as he would any other trainable creature, for as he speculates, “a dog if stared at hard enough and long enough will show symptoms of embarrassment, and so at length did my bench of Belgians” (95; ch. 7).

Power is the organizing principle at the core of every institution described in *The Professor*. Such institutions, Foucault argues, would inevitably be driven by suspicion and require a method of enforcement to protect and sustain their power. There may be “method in madness,” as Polonius and Hunsden claim, but more specifically, there is “method in [the] madness” of absolute power, and a deep and pervasive suspicion following in its wake. Both spiritual diseases reflect the uncertainty of the time in which these works were written; both generate a system of surveillance, which, for good reason, is more structured and intractable in the Victorian than in the Renaissance work. Ultimately, Hamlet’s “deep plots” and practices of surveillance “pall” in the context of his medieval faith, which, though subject to doubt, is yet so intact that he can believe in “a divinity that shapes our ends,/ Rough-hew them how we will” (V,i.10). As the strength of such faith in divine providence is unsustainable in an industrial age, one may

reasonably claim that Brontë has conceived that theology transposed in her own time into an efficient technology of surveillance and control, which, as she shows in *The Professor*, is more unyielding in the nineteenth than the seventeenth century because its operations and forms have been codified into the matrix of the normative culture.

The methods of suppression, repression, and surveillance as they are practiced in a nineteenth century institution are examples of that modern codification, and are specified in some detail when William enters the employ of Zoraïde Reuter, the directress of a Belgian school for girls. Either Brontë was directly familiar with Jeremy Bentham's diagram for the "Panopticon" fifty years earlier, or she had absorbed its dynamic and effect on educational institutions as she describes them in *The Professor*. Designed for the purpose of constantly scrutinizing and regulating its inhabitants, the Panopticon provides an ideal architectonic image for those strategies of control through objectification of the other that seem to dominate William Crimsworth's world. As Dreyfus and Rabinow state Foucault's terms, the architect of the Panopticon structure succeeds in "bring[ing] together knowledge, power, the control of the body, and the control of space into an integrated technology of discipline" (189).

In *The Professor*, Mdlle Reuter is the "skillful architect" who in pronouncing as a matter of routine school policy that "surveillance will be strictly attended to" (109; ch. 9) is making no idle threat, considering that the architectural and organizational design of the school permits her to directly or indirectly observe

and control the individuals who inhabit its space. In the school, as in the Panopticon, “each individual has a place and each place has its individual” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment* 143): the classroom is separated by a blackboard into two divisions, each “under the surveillance” of a teacher “keeping guard” over the other teacher, the blackboard – itself a signifier of power, as the students must heed the white marks chalked on its surface – forming a partial wall at one side of the enclosure, and the teacher, seated at an isolated desk in front of the class, forming the other. The desk is also placed on a dais one step above the students’ desks, so that the teacher can easily watch and “command” their activities. A structure of connecting corridors and rooms enables Mdlle Reuter to appear and silently “[glide] away” at a moment’s notice, and to observe, intervene, and “stealthily” gather whatever information she needs to augment her knowledge and her power. Ostensibly creating another impenetrable wall in her seat at the back of the classroom, she is always imperceptibly vigilant. Like Dickens’ Madame La Farge, working the names of traitors into her handiwork, she knits intently, her head bent but her eyes slightly raised, as “peculiarities of character are being developed [. . .], important interests canvassed” (123; ch. 11), and signs of the slightest resistance to conformity observed.

Fearing any hint of subversion or individual distinction, she does not tolerate secluded moments between any two inhabitants in the school, nor do they expect such privacy as their implicit right. Whenever William attempts to engage Frances in a private conversation – initially for professional reasons and later because he is developing a personal interest in her -- Mdlle Reuter abruptly

intrudes on their space and concocts any excuse for separating them. On one occasion, William closes the space around them by placing Frances “just where [he] wanted her to be, that is, between [his] desk and the window, where she was screened from the rush of the second division, and where no one could steal up behind her to listen” (164; ch. 16). From this strategic act it is evident, as Foucault maintains about the discourse of power, that he, like the others, has internalized the institutional structure and knows very well that his attempt to gain privacy “[will] be considered a very strange thing”:

when I glanced around, behold all the boarders [. . .]
 were congregated within a yard or two of my desk, and
 stood staring with eyes and mouths wide open; the three
 maîtresses formed a whispering knot in one corner, and close
 at my elbow was the directress, sitting on a low chair, calmly
 clipping the tassels of her finished purse. (165; ch. 16)

While careful to make her power felt, Mdlle Reuter does not, like *Jane Eyre's* Mr. Brocklehurst, mean to discipline or punish openly, but efficiently and secretly to remove the troublesome and inefficient teacher and what she considers “the rebellious circumstance”:

I mind my knitting, events progress, circumstances glide past;
 I see one which, if pushed ever so little awry, will render
 untenable the post I wish to have vacated -- the deed is done --
 the stumbling block removed -- and no one saw me: I have not

made an enemy, I am rid of an incumbrance (184; ch. 18).

She conceals her brutality in the illusory and empty language of euphemism, claiming even after she has summarily and pitilessly dismissed Frances Henri, that “no master or teacher has ever been *dismissed* from [her establishment].” Of course, she may “[find] it necessary to change [instructors] frequently,” but that change, she argues, “is often beneficial to the interests of a school; it gives life and variety to the proceedings; it amuses pupils, and suggests to parents the idea of exertion and progress” (182; ch. 18). She portrays Frances to William in a language similarly coded to disguise her own ulterior motives, wishing to appear, at once, superior to Frances and altruistic in serving her best interests, while actually attempting to undermine her power over William by convincing him that she is an inferior, unworthy of his attention:

Monsieur, it is of course an excellent plan to encourage effort in young people by making conspicuous the progress of any particularly industrious pupil; but do you not think that in the present instance, Mdlle Henri can hardly be considered as a concurrent with the other pupils? [. . .] her sphere of life is somewhat beneath theirs; under these circumstances, a public distinction, conferred upon Mdlle Henri, may be the means of suggesting comparisons, and exciting feelings such as would be far from advantageous to the individual forming their object. The interest I take in Mdlle Henri’s real welfare makes me desirous of screening her from annoyances of this sort; besides, monsieur,

as I have before hinted to you, the sentiment of *amour-propre* has a somewhat marked preponderance in her character; celebrity has a tendency to foster this sentiment, and in her it should be repressed – she rather needs keeping down than bring forward; and then I think, monsieur – it appears to me that ambition, *literary* ambition especially, is not a feeling to be cherished in the mind of a woman; would not Mdlle Henri be much safer and happier if taught to believe that in the quiet discharge of social duties consist her real vocation, than if stimulated to aspire after applause and publicity? (178; ch. 18)

So that she may successfully dominate William as well as Frances, Mdlle Reuter seeks out and learns what she considers to be the “salient points, and eccentric points, and weak points” of William’s character:

she was applying now this test, now that, hoping in the end to find some chink, some niche, where she could put in her little firm foot and stand upon my neck – mistress of my nature. Do not mistake me, reader, it was no amorous influence she wished to gain – at that time it was only the power of the politician to which she aspired; I was now installed as a professor in her establishment, and she wanted to know where her mind was superior to mine – by what feeling or opinion she could lead me. (118; ch. 10)

She observes, for example, that he is vain, “sentimental,” and impressionable, and in her attempt to unsettle and enthrall him, she fluctuates between “coquetry,” flattery, attention, on the one hand, and “modest dignity” and cool authority on the other. Although William has noted her “little schemes of craft,” his vanity overtakes his ability to discern between reality and illusion. He succumbs to her wiles, fantasizes about his power over her, and with the same denial of the real facts that he notes in Hunsden, projects onto her his own “romantic visions” of the “ideal bride”:

What a good simple little smile played about her lips when she gave me the branch of lilacs! I have thought her crafty, dissembling, interested sometimes, it is true; but may not much that looks like cunning and dissimulation in her conduct be only the efforts made by a bland temper to traverse quietly perplexing difficulties? [. . .] Supposing she were to marry an English and Protestant husband, would she not, rational, sensible as she is, quickly acknowledge the superiority of right over expediency, honesty over policy? (137; ch. 12)

He believes he is on “the brink of falling in love” until he unconsciously resorts to surveillance himself. Overhearing, at first, and then listening in on a private conversation between Middle Reuter and M. Pelet, William becomes aware of her political scheming and his own vulnerable position in the social, sexual, and political hierarchy she oversees. His sentimental fantasy of love is shattered by her response to M. Pelet’s jealous recriminations:

Truly, my dear François, I will not deny that this young

Englishman may have made some attempts to ingratiate himself with me. [. . .] [But] how could I prefer an unknown foreigner to you? And then [. . .] Crimsworth could not bear comparison with you either physically or mentally; he is not a handsome man at all; some may call him gentlemanlike and intelligent looking, but for my part -- (139; ch. 12)

As he does in his relationships with Charles, Edward, Hunsden, and, as we shall see, Frances Henri, William responds to Mdlle Reuter's "defection" by asserting his own calculated and often sadistic power, and in his present post-Edenic state of love, by now consciously using surveillance -- "I watched her as keenly as she watched me" -- to protect his interests and maintain that power. Evidence of William's sadism is manifest in the first battle they wage, he meeting her efforts to seduce him with hard indifference, and having gained power, matching her manipulation and seduction with his own. Confessing that his "*armour propre* [is] excited by conquest," he describes in transparently sexual and sadistic language the pleasure he derives from her defeat and her pain:

I shot into her eyes from my own, a look where there was no respect no love, no tenderness, no gallantry; where the strictest analysis could detect nothing but scorn, hardihood, irony; I made her bear it, and feel it. (142; ch. 13)

Once believing that he has subdued her, he becomes despotic -- "this slavish homage instead of softening my heart, only pampered whatever was stern and exacting in its mood" (157; ch. 15) -- and describes his sado-masochistic sexuality

– for as he says, “I was no pope” (214; ch. 20) – in consciously felt and tortured detail:

I had ever hated a tyrant; and, behold the possession of a slave, self-given, went near to transform me into what I abhorred! There was at once a sort of low gratification in receiving this luscious incense from an attractive and still young worshipper; and an irritating sense of degradation in the very experience of the pleasure. When she stole about me with the soft step of a slave, I felt at once barbarous and sensual as a pasha. I endured her homage sometimes; sometimes I rebuked it. My indifference or harshness served equally to increase the evil I desired to check. (11; ch. 20)

From one to the other, the sado-masochistic sexual “battle” for power plays itself out. Her “servility creates [his] despotism.” She “hovers around him like a fascinated bird.” He is “transformed [. . .] into a rigid pillar of stone.” She “[tramples] on the neck of humility, [kneels] at the feet of disdain” (157; ch. 15). Sometimes he plays the hunter, she the hunted, and sometimes their roles are reversed. He describes her as a helpless creature, while noting at the same time that she seems to be plotting “to lure back the game she had scared.” As he visualizes her, she is the image of vulnerability – “her small foot [peeping] from the soft folds of her purple merino gown” – and a mixture of white, delicate innocence and hard, cold violence and authority – “her hand, ivory white, with a bright garnet ring on the forefinger, and a light frill of lace round the wrist”

(144; ch. 13). When she thinks him “nearly won,” he finds it “sweet” “to turn around and smile in her eyes, half scornfully, and then to witness her scarcely veiled, though mute mortification.” She perseveres, her transitory victory described in metaphorically sexual terms, as “at last,” she pierces his resistance and renders him helpless: “her finger, essaying, proving every atom of the casket, [touches] its secret spring, and for a moment, the lid [springs] open; [and] she [lays] her hand on the jewel within” (134;12)

For the most part, Brontë describes Mdlle Reuter as a malevolent, even Satanic character, but adds another dimension to her characterization, which like that of Mme Beck, her counterpart in *Villette*, gives her more complexity than the simple portrait of a corrupt seductress would suggest. Taken from Brontë’s own life, both characters are modelled after Mme Heger, the Belgian school mistress believed by Brontë, in the words of Irene Taylor, to be “jealous, secretly observant, and manipulative in many of the same ways” (222). Taylor’s description is borne out by the respective texts, but does not alone account for the conceptual context in which Brontë places these fictional characters. On the one hand, as Brontë conceives them, both characters epitomize the world represented by Bigben Close, where Hunsden claims “ideality, comparison, [authentic] self-esteem [and] conscientiousness” (60; ch. 3) have become irrelevant. In that depiction of Bigben Close, Brontë creates a microcosm of the larger profane world she describes in this novel and *Villette*, and in her characterizations of Mdlle

Reuter and Mme Beck, she creates two of that larger world's spiritually impoverished representatives.

From another perspective, Brontë gives these same characters heroic qualities: the power of intellect, "talent," and enterprise, and the courage to do battle, lose, and then surmount the difficult circumstances they face as single women of modest means. With her representation of Mdlle Reuter as "une véritable maîtresse-femme," "une reine," "a wary general," (8, 104) a skilled diplomat, and Mme Beck as a "very great and very capable woman" (8, 137), Brontë foresees the modern conception of the "new woman" character, whose intelligence and independence are given full measure by Eliot's Leonora Halm-Eberstein, Meredith's Diana Merion and Hardy's Sue Bridehead, in the late nineteenth century, and Lawrence's Gudrun Bragwen and Shaw's Barbara, in the early twentieth century. William, in fact, speculates about Mdlle Reuter's place in the popular literary genres of the time: "Is she like the [typical] women of novelists and romancers?" he wonders. He suspects not, because, as he remarks, "to read of female characters as depicted in Poetry and Fiction, one would think it was made up of sentiment, either for good or bad" (119; ch. 10), whereas he suspects that she belongs to a different literary type, and the reader knows, to a different time. What Brontë claims for Mme Beck --that in character and talent, she has what the Victorians considered masculine strengths -- is also true of Mdlle Reuter: she, too, is more like a man -- although William states that view of women in conventional Victorian terms: "here is a specimen and a most sensible and respectable specimen, too, whose staple ingredient is abstract reason. No

Talleyrand was ever more passionless than Zoraïde Reuter!" (119; ch.9). William "respects her talent"; he finds her "a fascinating little woman," a woman of "tact, *caractère*, judgment, discretion" (137; ch. 12). Comparing her to the typically admired infantile coquette, represented in the novel by Mrs. Edward Crimsworth, he claims that "the idea of marrying [such] a doll or a fool was always abhorrent to [him]":

I know that a pretty doll, a fair fool, might do well enough for the honeymoon; but when passion cooled, how dreadful to find a lump of wax and wood laid in my bosom, a half idiot clasped in my arms, and to remember that I had made of this my equal -- nay my idol -- to know that I just pass the rest of my dreary life with a creature incapable of understanding what I said, of appreciating what I thought or of sympathizing with what I felt! (137; ch. 12)

It is in *Villette*, Brontë's last and most fully realized novel, that we fully discern the presignifying nature of these female characterizations. To Mme Beck, Lucy Snowe attributes a power greater than the Victorian age will allow:

That school offered for her powers too limited a sphere; she ought to have swayed a nation: she should have been the leader of a turbulent legislative assembly. Nobody could have brow beaten her, none irritated her nerves, exhausted her patience, or over-reached her astuteness. In her own single person, she could have comprised the duties of a first minister and a superintendent of police. (137; ch. 8)

If in *Middlemarch* Reuter and Mme Beck Brontë anticipates the worldly power of the “new woman” character in twentieth century literature, then in Frances Henri and Lucy Snowe she recreates the spiritual power of the saintly figure described in legend, myth, and medieval hagiograph. In *The Professor*, as in *Villette*, Brontë creates a dialectic between past, present, and future ideals, between what has been lost and gained, between the spiritual power that is fast disappearing, and the worldly power taking its place. On the one hand, she makes the worldly figure the signifier for the false pharisee, the “pitiless Minos,” the Miltonic Satan, and the modern skeptic, who “doubts the reality and undervalues the worth of modesty, affection, disinterestedness” (157; ch. 15), “ideality, comparison, self esteem, and conscientiousness” (60; ch. 3), the very virtues that the saintly figure embodies. William describes *Middlemarch* Reuter in just these terms:

She would trample on the neck of humility, she would kneel at the feet of disdain; she would meet tenderness with secret contempt, indifference she would woo with ceaseless assiduities. Benevolence, devotedness, enthusiasm, were her antipathies; for dissimulation and self interest she had a preference -- they were real wisdom in her eyes; (157-58; ch. 15)

On the other hand, Brontë looks back to the Christian past through Frances Henri’s essay on King Alfred, presented in the novel as an important signifier for its religious and literary themes and Frances’s character as a figurative St. Frances. First, the essay simultaneously marks the fall of Christian power to the pagan Danish force and intimates Christian redemption by underscoring the

sacred date on which Alfred speaks: "It is Christmas Eve, 'says he,' I mark the date [. . .] [when] My God, whose Son, as on this night, took on Him the form of man [. . .]" (162; ch. 16). Second, for William, it is a test of Frances's poetic imagination and skill as a writer: "Now," he thinks, "I shall see a glimpse of what she really is; I shall get an idea of the nature and extent of her powers; not that she can be expected to express herself well in a foreign tongue, but still, if she has any mind, here will be a reflection of it" (161; ch. 16). Third, as is implicit in Alfred's words, the reader, as well as William, sees "a glimpse of what she really is," and gets an idea of the "nature and extent" of her power to create symbols and her symbolic power in the text. Fourth, the essay establishes a connection between Frances and Alfred as writers and translators of prose works into English, which in the symbolic context of this novel is the sacred and only true language, and the measure of the intellectual and spiritual enlightenment of the students, Middle Reuter, and Frances. And fifth, both characters are invested with specific sacred meaning: Albert -- "the crownless king" -- is written as the fallen Son of God, and Frances -- the novel's only authentically spiritual character -- as a modern version of the devoted saint who serves and lives in divine spirit.

In a discussion of Fanny Price's symbolic meaning in *Mansfield Park*, Felicia Bonaparte pointed out that Francis was a significant name in late eighteenth and nineteenth century literature because, as in the Austen novel, it was meant to be a symbolic reference to St. Francis of Assisi. (2/19/92) The claim made here that Brontë uses the name to create a symbolic nexus between Frances Henri and Saint Francis is substantiated by the details of the saint's legend as it is outlined in

Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda de Aurea*, a thirteenth century work translated into English by William Caxton in the fifteenth century, and described by its modern translator, William Granger Ryan, as "the most widely read book after the Bible in the late Middle Ages." In all likelihood, Brontë either knew the book or had absorbed many of its sacred legends. Clearly, she, as well as many other nineteenth century novelists, used names of saints in the spirit of Jacobus's belief that "a name is the symbol of the person who bears it, and that in its letter and syllables can be found the indication of what the person's life, with its virtues and triumphs, is to be" (xvii). The point here is not to analyze the saint's name etymologically, as de Voragine does, but, as he also does, to seek answers in "the hidden meanings and the spiritual message which the name[s] convey" (xvii). De Voragine tells us that Christ spoke to St Francis, calling him "to go and repair my house, because, as you see, it has fallen into ruins," and that St. Francis followed the Lord's commandment, thereby fulfilling his sacred mission "to teach others" "to walk the way of holy simplicity," to demystify "diabolical illusion," and reveal divine truth. (221)

By the same signs, we recognize Frances Henri as the one who has the power to demystify William's confusion about Hunsden, Middle Reuter, and his own divided being. She functions as Middle Reuter's opposite: with her knitting the latter constructs a maze, a pattern, an armor, while the former "[unloosens] knotty points" and gleams the truth. In the manner of saint or prophet, we have also seen that Frances has the power to uncover and illuminate the hidden "method in Hunsden's madness," to pierce his illusions, and expose the desire

beneath the sham of his expressed iconoclasm: "You want to annihilate individual patriotism and national greatness as an atheist would annihilate God and his own soul, by denying their existence." "Your method is to squeeze the sap out of creation and make manure of the refuse, by way of turning it to what you call use"(263; ch. 24). Frances names the England that Hunsden rejects, a paradise, and the world he inhabits, a hell on earth: it is "a world without associations" and more pointedly, without love. To Hunsden's questions, "Mademoiselle, what is an association? [. . .] What price will it bring in the market?" she answers, "Your portrait, to any one who loved you, would, for the sake of association, be without price" (263; ch. 24). Her words pierce his defenses, for as he understood about the portrait of William's mother, such a portrait is beyond material value. William hears Frances's remarks, and for the first time, the sacred nature of their union is made manifest to the reader and to him. He is now able to read Hunsden's hidden truth as Frances reveals it:

That inscrutable Hunsden heard this remark and felt it rather acutely, too, somewhere; for he coloured – a thing not unusual with him, when hit unawares on a tender point. A sort of trouble momentarily darkened his eye, and I believe he filled up the transient pause succeeding his antagonist's home thrust, by a wish that someone did love him as he would like to be loved – someone whose love he could unreservedly return. (261; ch. 24)

Brontë differentiates Frances from the profane world by creating a polarity between her physical type, language, aspiration, and religion, and those of Mdlle

Reuter. It is apparent, that Zoraïde Reuter would be the wrong choice for William. Even on first meeting her, he notes that this “little,” “roundly formed,” sexual and worldly woman is hardly the nun-like figure he expected to see, while Frances is precisely the figure that William anticipated in Middle Reuter, and seems to be seeking throughout the novel as his “Destiny” and the realization of his “Quest.” He is struck at first by her long pale face, the “anxious and preoccupied expression [. . .] [which] seemed the indication of riper years,” and by the slightness of her figure, that was “distinct from [the Belgian’s] and evidently, the type of another race -- of a race less gifted with fullness of flesh and plenitude of blood; less jocund, material, unthinking” (151; ch. 14). She has “the look of a recluse, rather conventual, but withal very distinguished look; its grave simplicity added nothing to beauty, but much to dignity, the finish of the white collar and manchettes suffice for a relief to the merino gown of solemn black; ornament was forsworn” (258; ch. 24). The details of description suggest Eliot’s description of Dorothea Brooke as the modern St. Teresa, who similarly wears no ornaments and whose “plain garments [. . .] gave her the impressiveness of a fine quotation from the Bible” (1. ch. 1).

From the legend of St. Frances, we learn that he miraculously received the power to speak in the French language, and that “whenever he was filled with the ardor of the Holy Spirit, he burst out with ardent words in French” (de Voragine 220). As it is her native language, Frances speaks French with “pure and polished accent” (259; ch. 24), but she also has the power to speak and write in English, which, as noted, in this novel is the language of the spirit. William

describes her ability to speak in “accent” “pure and silvery” as “an extraordinary feat” (154; ch. 15), and describes her written work as “powerful” (177: ch. 18). Threatened by such distinction – “[it] may be the means of suggesting comparisons” – Mdlle Reuter ignores her talent and attempts to thwart her intellectual ambition by relegating her to uninspiring mechanical work as a teacher of sewing. But Frances “can show no power in sewing, no superiority” in that endeavor, for as she says, “it is a subordinate art” (172; ch. 17): it is literally a material form because it entails working on goods; and figuratively so, because sewing – or knitting in the case of Mdlle Reuter -- is, in this novel, analogous to the materialistic and mechanistic activity of the larger culture.

Frances’s authentic world is structured by language. She inhabits only a small corner of physical space, but lives in a greater conceptual world of abstract ideas and linguistic forms. In that place she possesses the power to compare past stories and present events, to transpose myth into symbolic meaning, and to make analogies between her own narrow experience and her knowledge of the world. Looking to England as her “Canaan,” she reveals her plan to teach in an English school, although as William points out, all [she] could see of Great Britain would be the interior of a school [. . .].” He wonders, “What would be the value of observations made on a scale so narrow?” to which she responds:

Monsieur, might not one learn something by analogy? [. . .]
 a sample often serves to give an idea of the whole; besides,
 narrow and wide are words comparative, are they not? All
 my life would perhaps seem narrow in your eyes -- all the life

of a [. . .] mole which lives underground would seem narrow
even to me. (171-2; ch. 17)

For poet and saint, Frances Henri or Lucy Snowe, figurative language is a revelation of the sacred. Whether in the form of analogy, allusion, personification, or metaphor, it imposes distinction and resemblance, representation and identity, on a spiritually indeterminate world. As they are allegorically conceptualized, Frances Henri and Lucy Snowe represent and enact sacred form: they embody the church and resurrect the church as St. Francis is called on to do by God. William sees in Frances his “ideal of the shrine,” the “personification” and “model” of saintly virtues – of “discretion and forethought,” of “truth and honor,” of “self denial and self control,” and she addresses him in the submissive language of religious form. The constraint of hierarchical and rhetorical structure paradoxically frees her to fulfill her allegorical identity; the more formal and commanding William becomes in manner and speech, the more she flourishes and grows, coming into her own as an autonomous, spiritual being. Under his “austere” and “managerial” influence, she writes stories and poems in a language “chaste and choice, in a style nerved with vigour and graced with harmony” (177; ch. 18). She transforms the language of authoritarian political power, spoken by every other character, including William, who is sometimes sadistic even to her, into a ritualized language of humility and love. Addressed by her with reverence, he responds with love: “I loved the tones in which she uttered the words – ‘Mon maître! mon maître!’” (195; ch. 19) In the manner of de Voragine, she names him as she identifies him, and even after they marry, and

despite his asking her to call him by his first name, she insists on authentic form, addressing him with formal respect, because as she says, “‘Monsieur’ belongs to you; I like it best” (271; ch. 25).

The Professor, *Jane Eyre*, and *Villette* are quest novels. Like Christian in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the protagonists embark on a spiritual journey, meeting obstacles in the shape of each allegorical character who tests their faith along the course they have set for themselves. Frances’s dismissal and forced disappearance from Mdllle Reuter’s school becomes the greatest test of William’s love. For the first time since he arrived in Brussels, he wanders from the institutions of power to seek and to claim the source of his true salvation. He goes from church to church, from one holy house to another, until he finally finds her in the house of the dead, standing between death and life, but along with William, about to be reborn into a new world which they will recreate by the power of their love. They pass through the “gates of death,” into the “freedom [that is] indispensable” (279; ch. 25). To mark the beginning of that renovated world, she reads aloud from “Milton’s invocation to that heavenly muse, who on the ‘secret top of Oreb or Sinai’ had taught the Hebrew shepherd born in the womb of chaos how the conception of a world had originated and ripened” (202; ch. 19).²²

In Frances Henri, William finds his spiritual home, and through her, his life is redeemed. But as he is of this world, the possibility of darkness tragically remains. So it is in each of Brontë’s allegorical novels. In *The Professor*, the intimation of a breach in the paradise that William and Frances have made is

indicated by Brontë's characterization of the son they name Victor, the symbol of their created victory and the seed of future loss and pain. He is "a true son of his father," sensitive, intense, intellectual, and passionate to a fault: in Victor's temper, there is "a kind of electrical ardour and power -- which omits now and then ominous sparks." But Frances's influence will inspire him as well:

Frances gives this something in her son's marked character
no name; but when it appears in the grinding of his teeth, in
the glittering of his eye, in the fierce revolt of feeling against
disappointment, mischance, sudden sorrow, or supposed injustice,
she folds him to her breast, or takes him to walk with her alone in
the wood; then she reasons with him like any philosopher and to
reason Victor is ever accessible. (289; ch. 25)

While his name signifies the successful outcome of his parents' quest, it does not necessarily intimate his own victory in the world. Like his father and all of Adam's seed, he will inevitably suffer "the offending Adam[']s" doom; "he will, some day get blows instead of blandishments -- kicks instead of kisses; then for the fit of mute fury which will sicken his body and madden his soul" (289; ch. 25). In an unregenerate world, William can only hope that Victor, too, will be "summon[ed] to resurrection" (87; ch. 7); that he will make his own journey, recreate his own shrine, and come out of "the ordeal of merited and salutary suffering," as William has, "a wiser and better man" (289; ch. 25). The love that he has already received will guide him, but as we have seen, Brontëan

allegory is not about the love that is given, but the love that is created out of symbolic form.

Chapter 3: Jane Eyre As Secular Prophet

In chapter ten of her autobiography, Jane Eyre tells the reader that she has described the significant details of her first ten years of life, but skipped over the years she considers unessential to her narrative, declaring that “this is not to be a regular autobiography: I am only bound to invoke memory where I know her responses will possess some degree of interest” (97; ch. 10). With Jane’s suggestive statement, Brontë gives notice that *Jane Eyre* will not be a mimetic work, and prepares the way for writing a different kind of autobiographical narrative. In so doing, she places Jane’s artistic intentions, as she does Lucy Snowe’s, in a Carlylean context. She uses his self-reflexive techniques to create a conversation between her and the informed reader, giving the former the power to divine and shape an abstract truth more vital than fact, and the latter the task of interpreting the signs and symbols selected by Brontë and her fictional autobiographer to represent that truth. Of course Brontë participates in the conversation, just as the fictional Editor does in the conversation with the autobiographer and reader in *Sartor Resartus*, and referring specifically to *Jane Eyre*, Qualls suggests as much by naming Brontë “the editor of an autobiography whose ‘author,’ addresses the ‘Reader’ directly.” Having pointed to the affinity between the two authors, Qualls makes a claim for a unified intrinsic and extrinsic purpose in *Sartor Resartus* that applies to *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* as well. In Carlyle’s work, he says, “writers, readers, fictional protagonists – all are questers bound together within the volume” (12).

The self-reflexive mode identifies Brontë the “editor,” Jane the fictional writer, artist, and reader, and even Jane’s addressed “Reader” as something other than agents in a socially driven *Bildungsroman*.¹⁹ Joined in a hermeneutic endeavor, they are as Plato names the poets, the “interpreters of the gods” (*Ion* 534e); in Carlylean and Romantic terms, the prophets who divine the truth; and as Shelley assigns the poet’s function, the “prophet[s]” or “legislator[s]” who “[lift] the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and make familiar objects appears as if they were not familiar” (487). Brontë’s reading of the prophetic identity includes the Hebrew word meaning the “declarer” of God’s message, the Greek word meaning the “interpreter” of god’s will, and to some degree, the medieval idea of the “predictor” of future events. But her interpretation of the term seems understandably more closely aligned with Shelley’s and Carlyle’s conception of the poet-prophet, who, according to Carlyle, “[penetrates]” the “Appearance of Man and his work” to glean “divine mystery” (“The Hero as Poet” 89-90), and according to Shelley, “not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but [. . .] beholds the future in the present [. . .] his thoughts [. . .] the germs of the flow and the fruit of latest time” (483). Their words pre-echo Brontë’s own in her letter describing her view of what the artist should be. Rejecting what she considers Jane Austen’s prosaic fiction, she asserts her own Carlylean and Shelleyan vision:

what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes

through, what is the unseen Seat of Life and the sentient target of Death -- this Miss Austen ignores. She no more, with her mind's eye, beholds the heart of her race than each man, with bodily vision sees the heart in his heaving breast.²⁴

Her words reveal her way of thinking about fiction, but more specifically, bear upon her characterization of Jane Eyre. Brontë gives to her fictional autobiographer the visionary power she describes, assigning to her in her role as writer- artist- reader the Romantic and Victorian conception of the poet-prophet, who penetrates texts to discern the “unseen reality” in their structural and symbolic forms. Observing in the novel's first chapter that the “introductory pages” of Bewick's *A History of British Birds* contain the “half comprehended” but “strangely impressive” signs for reading its succeeding pages, Jane alerts the reader to the importance of beginnings, while implying also that the introductory language and allusions in her own history similarly “[connect] themselves” and “[give] significance” to the characters, events, imagery, and allusions that follow. Bewick's *History* is, of course, one of those formative allusions, as are certain books of the Bible, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Rasselas*, and Brontë's references in her preface²⁵ to the Prophet Micaiah and Thackeray. Both Brontë and Jane, the real and the fictional authors, indicate that these works and figures inform and/or frame the narrative structure and its connotative meaning.

Responding in her preface to the charge of a small group of readers that *Jane Eyre* is immoral, “an insult to piety,” the work of “a woman unsexed,” Brontë

claims that in her characterization of Jane she intended to create a modern-day prophet, who like Micaiah, “plucks the mask from the face of the Pharisee” and like Thackeray, “speaks truth as deep, with a power as prophet-like and as vital, a mien as dauntless and as daring” “as the son of Imlah” (Preface 35). As the account in 1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 28 tells us, the Prophet Micaiah distinguishes himself from four hundred false prophets by revealing the authentic though unwelcome message to the King, while the allegorical narrative in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*²⁶ reveals the “warped system of things” both in and to his generation. In referring to Micaiah and Thackeray, Brontë locates herself, and more specifically Jane Eyre, in their tradition, embodying her character with the authority, vision, and uncompromising truth that both the biblical and Victorian tradition imply.

Brontë's reference to Micaiah is echoed in Jane's stated preference for certain books in the Bible and her dismissal of the Psalms and exclusion of the Gospels from her list of “interesting” books. Of course, if we view the novel as an exclusively realistic work, we conclude that the ten-year old Jane would use the term “interesting” simply to express an age-appropriate partiality for adventurous, historical, and tragic books. But repeated soon after the adult narrator states her aesthetic intention to select and shape the interesting facts of her life, the term suggests, rather, a commitment of intellect and vision in Jane which Carlyle identifies with the poet-prophet and the artist-biographer writing a mythopoeic life. As these and other connotative signs accumulate, the reader becomes aware that Brontë's allusions and Jane's biblical and literary preferences have

prescriptive rather than descriptive value. It does not seem arbitrary, for example, that Jane finds certain prophetic and historical books “interesting” or that she lists them out of sequential order, beginning with Revelation, and going on to “the Book of Daniel, and Genesis, and Samuel, and a little bit of Exodus, and some part of Kings and Chronicles, and Job and Jonah” (42; ch. 4).

While there may not be an exact symmetry between the sequence of Jane’s list and the structure of her autobiography, there are enough parallels to suggest that Brontë arranges the Biblical texts in an order which informs her overall meaning and narrative design. Because Revelation is the last book and the culmination of all prophecy, Brontë, in her commentary on beginnings, alludes to that book early in the novel in its most structurally metaphysical sense, naming it first to signify the unity between the first and the last, and to suggest at the outset what kind of book she is writing, where it is going, and where it will end.

The progression of Jane’s list suggests the answers to those questions. With the Book of Daniel, Brontë provides the symbolic context of the novel and the overall form, meaning, and movement of its narrative, while also indicating formal and substantive differences that call attention to the mythopoeic character of the modern work. The narrative structure representing Daniel “as a youth of outstanding wisdom and piety who matures into a seer capable of receiving visions of the future” is replaced in the second half of the book by a purely abstract text devoted to Daniel’s apocalyptic visions and his prayers. Although rudimentary in its description of Daniel’s maturing prophetic power and in many of its symbolic details, the first half of the book serves as a paradigm for Jane’s

spiritual quest. But the absolute bifurcation between the concrete and abstract in the biblical text is considerably narrowed in the nineteenth century novel by its layered realistic and allegorical narrative, which through the interaction of its parts creates a participatory and mutually transformative relation between the two: the realistic narrative affected by its allegorical counterpart becomes spiritualized, while the allegorical narrative moored in versimilitude is given a comprehensive and complexly structured material form.

The biblical and nineteenth century books have also many symbolic details in common. For both Daniel and Jane, dream, vision, aesthetic artifact,²⁷ and writing²⁸ are the signifying manifestations of their prophetic function, but Daniel is the recipient and transmittor of God's divine message, while Jane creates a vision from her own imagination. The distinction between these world views is predetermined by the Scriptural teaching that the prophet or *nabi* "announces [or pours forth] the declarations of God" (Unger 1040), and the Romantic and Victorian belief in the visionary power of the individual imagination. Despite that distinction, however, it is important to note the analogy between Daniel's task to reveal the forgotten dream to the dreamer before he interprets its meaning, and Jane's task to reveal her dreams to the reader, who in turn will interpret their meaning. What becomes clear is that in forms appropriate to their respective genres, both the biblical and modern prophet engage their audience in the divining process.

Having alluded to the novel's prophetic structure and themes in Daniel, Jane names Genesis, the book narrating the events leading to Jacob's promise of a

saviour and of human redemption as the paradigm of her own quest. In seeking a unified vision and a unified self – the God within – Jane gives credence to Jacob’s words: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people be” (49:10).

The story between the promise and realization of redemption begins in the Bible, and by implication in Brontë’s visionary novel, with the Book of Samuel. Not only is he the first to hear God’s word and inspire belief in the coming of the Redeemer, but even more germane to the novel, he is the founder of the prophetic and kingly offices which coexist and interact for the first time in sacred history. Having noted in the introduction that the infusion of the secular with the sacred is a hallmark of Victorian fiction, we now add the claim that in *Jane Eyre*, particularly, the juxtaposition of prophetic and political imperatives is analogous to the sacred-secular duality in the Book of Samuel. While Brontë and other Victorians seek to create an ideal reality, they depart from that Romantic metaphysical tradition in favor of the Old Testament paradigm which incorporates the sacred into a historically, psychologically, and politically realistic narrative. In Samuel we see the conflict inherent in the emergence of a *realpolitic* tragically reflected in the account of Saul, whose kingly voice becomes more central to the text as Samuel’s prophetic voice recedes. But because he falls sway to empirical imperatives that counter the divine call, “the Spirit of the Lord depart[s] from Saul” (1 Sam. 16: 14), his worldly power deteriorates, and Samuel’s sacred voice

resurfaces and is ascendent once again.

The story of King David is a fuller and more intricate account of the relationship between the sacred and secular, and in its complexity is perhaps closer to the Victorian conception of that duality. As David Gunn observes, David's kingship "turns out to be no talisman," and he to be no saint. Like Saul, he is plagued by human frailty, and at certain times "he falters, unwilling to take the risk or to accept injured esteem issuing from rejection" (1 Sam. 25; 2 Sam. 11-12). "In these instances, the reality of deceit, greed, and violence" (Gunn 154) is surely comparable to the public world that Brontë describes. What Gunn goes on to say is especially relevant to the novel: "David's life [. . .] has a private as well as public dimension. What happens, privately, in his own house (palace and family) impinges on the nation" (154); and in this allegorical novel, too, as in *Villette* and *The Professor*, what happens in the psychological, sociological, and economic life of a single individual carries larger philosophical and metaphysical meaning.

In the Old Testament as well as in *Jane Eyre*, prophetic authority is continually threatened by secular power. Kings and Chronicles, the next books on Jane's list, further articulate the historical conflict between rival rulers of theocratic kingdoms and those who speak for God. Included in these books, and, as noted above, especially important to Brontë's novel, is the account of the Prophet Micaiah.

As for the ancient Hebrews, and as Carlyle claims for the hero of *Sartor*

Resartus, Jane's "Exodus" "can properly be nothing but a transit out of Invisibility into Visiblity" (63). The biblical book describing the departure of the Hebrews from Egypt, then tracing their formation into a nation selected by God to bring forth the promised Redeemer, is paradigmatic for the series of departures which advance Jane's quest for autonomy and presence. From Gateshead, to Lowood, to Thornfield, to Moor House, each move takes her to a higher form of freedom and meaning, each illuminates her path to her final redemption and true home -- both real and ideal -- at Ferndean.

In the process, however, she suffers greatly, and in her travail we recognize a Jobian figure whose sense of persecution and despair elicits questions and accusations directed to "Reason": "Why," she asks, "was I always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, forever condemned? Why could I never please? Why was it useless to try to win any one's favour?" "I dared commit no fault; I strove to fulfill every duty; and I was termed naughty and tiresome, sullen and sneaking, from morning to noon, and from noon to night" (22; ch. 2). But the essential question she asks and attempts to answer is Job's question: "I could not dare answer the ceaseless inward question -- why I thus suffered; now at the distance of -- I will not say how many years -- I see it clearly" (23; ch 2).

In placing the Book of Jonah last on her list, Jane signals backward and forward to Revelation, her first entry, the last and unifying book in the Bible, and the book which informs the final chapters of Jane's narrative. Though implied, not stated, that penultimate position gives Jonah legitimate hierarchical status if we consider, as many New Testament scholars do, that his experiences prophesy

the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and, in that sense, intimate the final Revelation. From another perspective, however, Jonah's position seems incongruous because it suggests that he is the traditional Old Testament prophet who transcends his faltering faith, obeys God's command, and announces His word to the multitude. What we find instead is, as James Crenshaw classifies him, the "antihero" "target of a [. . .] didactic satire" which examines the paradox between his flawed character and his sacred vocation. The discrepancy between his emblematic name, meaning "dove [of faithfulness or truthfulness]," and the irresolution and inauthenticity of "the little man whose inner thoughts remain virtually hidden" (380) is the same discrepancy Jane finds in other characters, and the conflict she must resolve in herself through genuine insight. To the extent that she falters, she is Jonah. From the beginning, she utters the truth as she knows it, but being human, she is limited, and like the biblical prophets, other than Jonah, who ultimately redeem themselves,²⁹ she will struggle for a clearer vision, greater truth, and redemption. Although Brontë does not say so, even her chosen paradigm of truth, the prophet Micaiah, deceives the King by ironically affirming the favorable predictions of false prophets in one passage, and by openly and honestly prophesying the defeat and death of the King a passage later. One may argue that the novel inhabits this interspace between deception and truth, between irony and authenticity, between one passage and the next, because contained in this small but vital space are the intrinsic elements of Jane's narrative quest.

Finally, it can be speculated that Jane excludes the Book of Psalms from

her list because the one psalm she alludes to during her imprisonment in the red room is too painful to acknowledge, especially to her enemies Mrs. Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst. After her first stay in the red room, she begs Mrs. Reed, just as the psalmist implores God, to release her from her prison. Jane cries, "O aunt have pity! Forgive me! I cannot endure it -- let me be punished some other way! I shall be killed if --" (25; ch. 2), while the psalmist cries unto the Lord, saying,

Attend unto my cry; for I am
brought very low: deliver me
from my persecutors; for they are
stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison
that I may praise thy name:
the righteous shall compass
me about; for thou shalt deal
bountifully with me. (Psalm 142: 6)

She might also exclude a collection of hymns of praise and worship like the Psalms, as well as the message of salvation in the Gospels, because her quest is not theological: she wishes neither to praise nor worship an exalted being, as we shall see in her responses to Helen Burns, Maria Temple, Edward Rochester, and St. John Rivers, nor to be granted an orthodox salvation "through the finished work of Jesus Christ" (Unger 494). Her mission is to answer the Jobian questions she raises above, to close the breach between past and present, and to locate her own authentic voice so that renovation can ultimately take place.

With reference to the secular works she mentions, Jane further defines her quest by interrogating and testing Johnson's claim in *Rasselas* that the conditions of human existence make perfect happiness unobtainable, as in the progress of her quest she makes her way like Swift's Gulliver through a socially, morally, and intellectually corrupt landscape. The ten-year old Jane reads Swift's allegory as fact -- "Lilliput and Brobdingnag being, in my creed, solid parts of the earth's surface" -- and indeed, it is precisely the allegory which will inform her artistic reality. Taking her own long voyage, she will see her version of "the little fields, houses, and trees, the diminutive people, the tiny cows, sheep, and birds of the one realm" (29; ch. 3).

She begins her reading of that journey by describing the introductory "words" and the "succeeding vignettes" in Bewick's *History*, her secular book of beginnings, whose frozen, "desolate" landscapes and broken images introduce us to the state of her psyche, the allegorical implications of the novel, and, as she implies, the meaning of the novel's "succeeding" forms. She gives those pages in *Bewick* a sacred dimension by telling us that she reads them in the seclusion of her self-created sanctuary, behind the "nearly close curtain" where she is "shrined in double retirement," and then further deepens that interiority by placing the scene of seclusion at the center of several other centripetal scenes: "From afar [. . .] a pale blank of mist and cloud; near, a scene of wet lawn and storm beat shrub, with ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast" (14; ch. 1); nearer still, the house itself separated from the outside only by clear

panes of glass; within, the window seat she inhabits; and at the innermost recess, the space behind the curtain where she reads her sacred text.

Her interpretation of the text gives us the first indication that Jane is Brontë's fictional prophet and allegorist, the task of both, as Fletcher claims for the allegorist, "to [reconstitute] divinely inspired messages [in] a revealed transcendental language [. . .]" (21). In those passages on Bewick, Brontë makes us aware of the "ambiguities, contradictions and [. . .] curiously haunting authority" (53) that Northrope Frye identifies with the prophetic text, and of their revelatory nature, which in such passages seem to stand out -- if only retrospectively -- from the context in which they are written.³⁰ This, Frye calls "the oracular or discontinuous prophetic, the passage of the text where we suddenly break through into a different dimension of response" (*Words With Power* 111). Frye's conception of the prophetic text is manifest in the connections Jane makes between her description of "the haunts of the sea fowl" and "the solitary rocks and promontories' by them only inhabited"; in the pictures of "the rock standing alone in a sea of billow and spray," "the broken boat stranded on a desolate coast," and "the cold and ghastly moon glancing through the bars of cloud at a wreck just sinking" (14-15; ch. 1). We can also discern connections between these signs in her Romantic and proto-surrealistic paintings, and the novel's larger allegorical narrative, each reflecting Jane's interpretation and/or recreation of the Bewick imagery, and each requiring the reader to participate as well in the interpretative act. In fact, Jane seems to point the reader in that

direction by broadly interpreting one of those images herself: “the two ships becalmed in a torpid sea, I [believe] to be marine phantoms” (15; ch. 1).

Most immediately the aesthetic of Jane’s paintings corresponds to that of Romantic painters including William Blake, to whom the “inner eye” rather than the manifest world was paramount. W. J. T. Mitchell refers to Blake’s symbolism as “pictorial [idea],” or, as Blake defines it, “Intellectual Vision” (19). Mitchell’s explanation of the relationship between Blake’s poetry and pictures is consistent with the idea put forth here that such a relationship exists between Jane’s visionary narrative and emblematic imagery. Mitchell writes as follows:

The aesthetic and iconographic independence of Blake’s designs from their texts [. . .] has [in addition to a mimetic function] a rhetorical or hermeneutic function, in that the contrariety of poem and picture entices the reader to supply the missing connections. In this light, the problematics of relating text and design serve [in Blake’s words to Thomas Butts, 6 July 1803] as an “allegory address’d to the Intellectual Powers” which is “fittest for Instruction, because it rouses the faculties to act” (33).

In addition to “Romantic,” using as above, the term “surrealistic,” to describe the imagery in Bewick and in Jane’s paintings may be said to be doubly anachronistic, because it not only refers to a twentieth century movement in literature and painting, but one which “[exploits] on a large scale” the emblematic imagery and “disquieting visual paradoxes” in certain symbolist poems and

paintings of the latter part of the nineteenth century. (Janson 626) In their comparison of the two movements, M. H. Abrams, Angus Fletcher, Anna Balakian, and H. W. Janson help us to locate intersections between Brontë's romantic allegory and later symbolist and surrealist works. Abrams points out that in symbolist works, the symbol is "transparent to a significance beyond itself," while in surrealist works, the juxtaposition of distant "opaque" images is generated by the workings of the unconscious mind. Balakian makes a connection between symbolist and surrealist poets, while Janson offers Odilon Redon, creator of the surrealist image in a painting entitled "The Balloon Eye" (1882), as an example of an artist whom "the Symbolists discovered and claimed as one of their own"(625). Fletcher includes this work and "The Titan's Goblet" by the nineteenth century British painter Thomas Cole among his illustrations of allegory: "In these [and other allegorical works]," Fletcher says, "is to be found that element of allegory which subsumes all the others, namely, isolation of parts -- the use of encapsulated visual units within a larger frame so as to produce a studied discontinuity within the whole. This 'isolation' is a direct consequence of ornamental imagery, daemonic abstraction, and an overall surrealism" (369).

What is noteworthy in these converging ideas is that in Brontë's 1847 novel there is a striking affinity between Jane's early "half-comprehended" perceptions, the images in her paintings, and those in symbolist and surrealist paintings. Because the Bewick images are more symbolist and transparent than surreal, they become effective clues for reading Jane's more opaque paintings, and in fact we see in the Bewick passages the beginnings of Jane's surrealist juxtapositions.

The same progression from the concrete to the abstract that was noted in the Book of Daniel occurs here in the discontinuous movement from the realistic depiction of place – “the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindenness or Naze, to the North Cape” – to the dreary impressionistic seascape described above, to the disconnected and increasingly abstract images that follow. She moves from coastline to churchyard without giving the reader an apparent marker:

I cannot tell what sentiment haunted the quite solitary
churchyard, with its inscribed headstone; its gate, its two
trees, its low horizon, girdled by a broken wall, and its newly
risen crescent, attesting the hour of even-tide.

And while we notice a link between images of the moon, broken objects, the sea and even-tide in the passages quoted above, we cannot easily establish any such material link between the following two scenes and those that preceded. They are clearly connected by the emotion of fear, but without the act of interpretation, the objects, images, and meaning in both sets of pictures seem generically, temporally, and spatially isolated:

The fiend pinning down the thief's pack behind him [. . .] was an
object of terror.

So was the black, horned thing seated aloof on a rock, surveying a
distant crowd surrounding a gallows. (15; ch. 1)

Fletcher's claim that “the visualizing, isolating tendency of surrealism is bound to appear wherever [an allegorical] system is desired,” and Frye's

observation about the discontinuous text as a manifestation of the prophetic, indicate the link between surreal, allegorical, and prophetic forms. Jane helps us to make that connection by the consistency of her stated intention to include only what is “interesting” in her allegorical autobiography. Reading Bewick, she observes that “each picture” is “ever profoundly interesting” because -- as is intrinsic to allegory -- it “told a story, mysterious often to my undeveloped understanding” (15; ch. 1). The story is carried in Jane’s interpretation of those images, and it tells us that she perceives herself as one of those birds in Bewick, living alone in the “death-white realms” at the edge of the world:

[I could not] pass unnoticed the suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with “the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space, -- that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the pole, and concentre the multiplied rigours of extreme cold.” (14; ch. 1)

The images of the “broken wall,” the “broken boat stranded on a desolate coast,” and “the wreck just sinking” have meaning on two abstract levels. On one level, they reflect Jane’s “stranded” spirit and the broken spirits of the Reeds and Brocklehursts, who in Calvinist terms have been “lifted into the air on a reed [of privilege], which being soon broken [. . .] [falls] to the ground”; and on another level, they represent the ruined artifacts of civilization and the soul or spirit which is fast disappearing from the world. The rock, the Christian symbol of the Church,

is yet “standing up in a sea of billow and spray,” but it is threatened by the devil’s minion, “seated aloof” on that rock, “surveying” and working evil, bringing terror and death to the “distant crowd.” The “cold and ghastly moon,” replaced in the next passage by “a newly risen crescent,” presages the journey of Jane’s soul, her renovation, and through her the renovation of the world.

Jane’s paintings are also composed of isolated and discontinuous images. These are described in detail below, not for the purpose of interpreting their psychological meanings -- difficult to do with any certainty considering the opacity of the images -- but in order to illuminate their proto-surrealistic and allegorical forms:

The first represented clouds low and livid, rolling over a swollen sea: all the distance was in eclipse; so too, was the foreground; or rather, the nearest billows, for there was no land. One gleam of light lifted into relief a half-submerged mast, on which sat a cormorant, dark and large, with wings flecked with foam; its beak held a gold bracelet, set with gems, that I had touched with as brilliant tints as my palette could yield, and as glittering distinctness as my pencil could impart. Sinking below the bird and mast, a drowned corpse glanced through the green water; a fair arm was the only limb clearly visible, whence the bracelet had been washed or torn.

The second picture contained for foreground only the dim peak of a hill, with grass and some leaves slanting as if by a breeze. Beyond

and above spread an expanse of sky, dark blue as at twilight: rising into the sky, was a woman's shape to the bust, portrayed in tints as dusk and soft as I could combine. The dim forehead was crowned with a star; the lineaments below were seen as through the suffusion of vapour; the eyes shone dark and wild; the hair streamed shadowy, like a beamless cloud torn by storm or by electric travail. On the neck lay a pale reflection like moonlight; the same faint lustre touched the train of thin clouds from which rose and bowed this vision of the Evening Star.

The third showed the pinnacle of an iceberg piercing a polar winter sky: a muster of northern lights reared their dim lances, close serried, along the horizon. Throwing these into distance, rose, in the foreground, a head. --a colossal head, inclined towards the iceberg, and resting against it. Two thin hands, joined under the forehead, and supporting it, drew up before the lower features a sable veil; a brow quite bloodless, white as bone, and an eye hollow and fixed, blank of meaning but for the glassiness of despair, alone were visible. Above the temples, amidst wreathed turban folds of black drapery, vague in its characters and consistency as cloud, gleamed a ring of white flame, gemmed with sparkles of a more lurid tinge. This pale crescent was "The likeness of a Kingly Crown"; what it diademed was "the shape which shape had none" (142-3; ch. 13).

Lawrence Moser, as Thomas A. Langford tells us in his essay "Prophetic

Imagination and the Unity of *Jane Eyre*,” “has interpreted the pictures as surrealistic, insisting upon ‘the surrealistic tenet that art of necessity mirrors the artist’s personality and mentality, in this case both Jane’s and Charlotte’s, and tends violently toward a complete revelation of self.’ That the pictures do indeed mirror certain aspects of the personality of both Jane and Charlotte is easily evident,” Langford says, “but they seem to me to go beyond this level in a way only indirectly hinted by Professor Moser [. . .]: it is not illogical to assume that they may symbolize the dominant action of the major sections of the novel.” Langford traces those symbolic connections between the pictures and “the three major sections of Jane’s life – Lowood, Thornfield, and Marsh End – each representing,” he says, “a major stage in the development of her character” (229-231). Jane Millgate sees the pictures as the “outward manifestations of [Jane’s] emotional state at particular moments.” She argues that they “offer one means, among many, of charting her growth to maturity” (315).

While Millgate views the paintings as a reflection of Jane’s psychological development, and Moser extends that view to include Brontë, Langford, who does make a case for Jane’s “prophetic imagination,” connects the paintings to the interplay of character and event rather than the allegory of Jane’s prophetic identity and Brontë’s novel. From the latter perspective, one could argue that Jane reveals through the paintings not only aspects of her psychology, as Moser and Millgate claim, but, along with Blake and other romantic painters, she and Bronte participate in the visionary tradition.

To what extent Jane’s paintings are proto-symbolist and surrealistic may be

determined by her description of their formal elements. For example, the absence of foreground and background in the first painting creates a sense of unreality and focuses the mind's eye on individual images. These are illuminated by "one gleam of light" and are set apart from each other by the size of the image, or its "brilliant" color, and the sharp and distinct outline of each. In the second painting, the foreground is dim and the background dominated by one image only, a "woman's shape to the bust" "rising into" "an expanse of sky," and in the third, the foreground is dominated by a "colossal head" resting against an iceberg, and the background by "the pinnacle of the iceberg piercing a polar winter sky." About these dreamscapes, the immediate question becomes, what is the relationship between these isolated and seemingly discontinuous images, and between Jane's paintings and Brontë's novel? We see that the woman's image is repeated in each painting: in the first as a corpse, the body plundered by the cormorant, which Langford says, "must have been suggested by Milton's description of Satan as a cormorant evilly leering from the branches of the Tree of Life" (233); in the second as a natural and/or celestial phenomenon, suggesting the correspondence "between the mind and the other world and between the natural and spiritual world" (Abrams 187); and in the third as "a colossal head" embodying the death of nature and spirit. As opaque as these images are, we may surmise from them something about the terms of Jane's quest: the extent of the risk she must take, and the pitfalls she will face in carrying it out.

The red-room episode may be considered the preamble to her quest, and another text like Bewick and the paintings, in which every element is a signifier

for Jane's prophetic role, symbolic journey, and ultimate redemption. The events leading to that episode conform to the universal pattern which Slochower describes as the mythic quest, beginning in its first stage with "the 'birth' of the hero, who is set out or invites expulsion [from the community] by his authoritative powers" (23). In both negative and positive forms, Jane's "authoritative powers" come from her distinction as an orphan in the Reed household. For example, we learn from Mrs. Reed's dying words, later in the novel, that she perceived Jane even in her infancy as a usurper and a nuisance -- "a sickly, whining, pining thing! It would wail in its cradle all night long -- not screaming heartily like any other child, but whimpering and moaning" (260; ch. 21) -- while she conveys through her expressed anger against Mr. Reed, who died before the novel begins, that he embraced the orphaned child in the spirit of Christ, giving his committed paternity, his special attention, protection, and a legitimate place in the family to its most fragile and persecuted member:

Reed pitied it; and he used to nurse it and notice it as if it had been his own: more, indeed, than he ever noticed his own at that age. He would try to make my children friendly to the little beggar: the darlings could not bear it, and he was angry with them when they showed their dislike. (260; ch. 21)

Having made her the object of her hatred, Mrs. Reed adds to Jane's special authority by making her also the vessel for her guilt, endowing her with such overwhelming psychic and supernatural power that she felt compelled to banish her first from the family and then from the house:

I have had more trouble with that child than any one would believe.

Such a burden to be left on my hands -- and so much annoyance as she caused me, daily and hourly, with her incomprehensible disposition, and her sudden starts of temper, and her continual unnatural watchings of one's movements! I declare she talked to me once like something mad, or like a fiend -- no child ever spoke or looked as she did; I was glad to get her away from the house.

(260; ch. 21)

Jane's status increases with the sequence of events beginning with the Bewick episode, followed by John Reed's violent attack against her and her angry response, her subsequent exile from the family, imprisonment in the red-room, and permanent exile from the home, this rapid progression having a controlled ritualistic quality, as if it were inevitable because impelled by an intangible agent or force. (Fletcher 40-1) Slochower would claim that with Jane's aggression against her cousin, no matter how justly deserved, she "transgresses against what [the family] regards as a natural or sacred order." "[She] becomes 'the dangerous child'; in Nietzsche's language, [she commits] a crime" (23), but a crime in Jane's case which is merely the catalyst for what follows, since her position as "the scapegoat of the nursery" had been predestined by the death of her uncle, her position as an orphan and outsider, and by her distinctive character:

I was a discord in Gateshead Hall; I was like nobody there;
[. . .] a heterogeneous thing, opposed to them in temperament,
in capacity, in propensities; a useless thing, incapable of serving

their interest, or adding to their pleasure; a noxious thing, cherishing the germs of indignation at their treatment, of contempt of their judgment. I know that had I been a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child – though equally dependent and friendless – Mrs. Reed would have endured my presence more complacently [. . .]. (23; ch. 2)

In mythic as well as realistic terms, then, Jane's exile and imprisonment are punishments for her act of aggression and special status as an outsider, and, according to Slochower's explanation of the mythopoeic drama, the consequence of specific events leading to her birth as the hero of her mythic quest. The signs made manifest and the travail generating her spiritual birth are experienced in the red-room, a "strong, significant space," which, here, as in *Villette*, conforms to Mircea Eliade's definition of sacred space: it "ontologically" gives birth to the world and marks the fixed point "for all future orientation" (21). In this space, Jane reveals her struggle, locates her voice, and unconsciously determines her future course.

The red-room exemplifies Eliade's characterization of sacred space as distinct "from the formless expanse surrounding it" (20), and indeed we are told that the "consecrated" place of Mr. Reed's death is differentiated from the other rooms in several ways: first, by its name, which evokes a myriad of connotative meanings; second by its isolation as a "spare chamber," "remote from the nursery and kitchens," and "very seldom slept in [or] never indeed"; and third, by its grandeur, as "one of the largest statliest chambers in the mansion" (20; ch. 2).

Eliade adds “consistency” to his characterization of sacred space, as does Brontë in her description of the red room. In keeping with its name, its furnishings are a variation of red or they are white, an opposition in Christian symbology signifying flesh and spirit, sin and purity, fire and light, life and death. The transformation of red into white, or of sin into spirit, is stated in Jehovah’s words to Isaiah (1: 18): “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” In biblical symbology, “red and white are the two colours sacred to Jehovah as God of love and wisdom” (Portal 125 n. 3); and in alchemical symbology,³¹ red is the color of the soul, of the libido, and of the heart, while white is the colour of passage from exaltation to love. (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 794)

These are not arbitrary connections; they are rather a part of Brontë’s symbolic vocabulary in *Villette* as well as *Jane Eyre*. In *Villette* they appear in the abstract pattern of Polly’s dress, “white sprinkled slightly with drops of scarlet,” “its girdle [. . .] red” (357; ch. 24); or in the “virginal” color of her clear white muslin dress; in “Ginevra’s dress of deep crimson which harmonized with her rose-like bloom” (398; ch. 27); in the suggestion of sensuality in Lucy’s pink dress; in “The Vivid,” the white ship of passage transporting Lucy from her dead life in England to her “vivid” new life in Belgium; in the events which take place on the evening of the Vashti performance, a night marked in Lucy’s “book of life, not with white but with a deep red cross” (342; ch. 16). Blood and fire are associated in *Villette* with the “unholy force” of Vashti, in *Jane Eyre* with that of Bertha

Mason, and in both novels, with the repressed passion of their protagonists.

M. Paul Emanuel describes Lucy as a “*sauvage! la flamme à l’âme, l’éclair aux yeux!*” (404; ch. 27); and the first signs of Jane’s passion and the implication of blood become apparent in her angry description of John Reed: “Wicked and cruel boy! ‘I said.’ You are like a murderer – you are like a slave driver – you are like the Roman emperors!” (27; vol I, ch. 1)

The door locked behind her, Jane finds the red-room “chill,” “silent,” and “solemn,” as a church, the bed on which Mr. Reed had lain dying “[standing] out like a tabernacle in the center.” Here, as in the Bewick passage, Jane ascribes religious function to the enclosed space she occupies, not in this case that of a sanctuary, but a holy place of sacrifice. She read Bewick in the window-seat behind folds of scarlet drapery, while in the red-room she is surrounded by curtains of deep red damask hanging from the mahogany pillars of the bed and from “the two large windows, with their blinds always drawn down” (21; ch. 2). In the latter passage, she describes a repetitious pattern of red and white in literal language, and in tropes (italicized below) evoking the colors and expanding the meaning of flesh and spirit, life and death, into more abstract terms:

the carpet was red; the table at the foot of the bed was covered
with a crimson cloth; the walls were a soft fawn colour, with a
blush of pink in it; the wardrobe, the toilet-table, the chairs were
of darkly polished old mahogany. Out of these deep surrounding
shades rose high, and glared white, the piled-up mattresses and

pillows of the bed, spread with a *snowy Marseilles counterpane*.

Scarcely less prominent was an ample, cushioned easy-chair near the end of the bed, also white with a footstool before it; and looking, as I thought, *like a pale throne*. (21; ch. 2)

The “pale throne” simile evokes the “great white throne” of God in Revelation 20: 11, that chapter of the Bible offering insight into Jane’s present state of being and the mythically determined path she will follow toward redemption. In the account in Revelation, “the souls of them” who suffer for their faith live a thousand years, while the sinners who betrayed the Lord are thrown out of heaven. Eventually, the Reeds will suffer the second fate, their sins leading to the death of the matriarch and son, a broken family structure, loss of income, and subsequent exile from the artificial paradise of their privileged home. For her part Jane, the sacrificial lamb who suffers now like those who “were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God” (Rev 20: 4), experiences the fear and trembling that comes with new life, becoming in the red-room vaguely aware of her identity, then soon after, asserting her authority, and throughout the course of her quest, moving on, stage by stage, to forge a coherent self.

Structure, too, according to Eliade, characterizes sacred space, and as we see in the Bewick and red-room passages, Jane’s vision is divided between the right and left sides. In the former passage, Jane’s view of the domestic scene to her right hand was closed off, while “to her left were the clear panes of glass protecting, but not separating [her] from the drear November day” (14; ch. 1). In

the latter passage, the bed she describes as a tabernacle in the center of the room has, to its right, a mahogany wardrobe reflecting on its surface the broken images of the room, and, to its left, the windows giving her a “muffled” view of the outside world. Significant in both passages are the symbolic meanings of right and left, which present a paradox in the novel, but one consistent with Jane’s character and the novel’s conceptual frame. “In the Old Testament,” according to Chevalier and Gheerbrant, “to look to one’s right hand is to look towards the side upon which one’s protector stands”: “I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul” (Psalm 142: 4). “This is the place of the elect at the Last Judgement, the damned going to the left [. . .] the direction of Hell [. . .] ” (801). But for Jane, as for the Psalmist, there is no protection from her worldly hell since her earthly fathers are dead both in reality and in her memory. Moreover, the conventionally “right” world represented by the Reeds is dead to her as well, a broken haven in her present life and a broken vision for the future.

Dispossessed from that world now and for all time, Jane’s character takes on an allegorical dimension in the red-room. The empty bed pointing to the loss of the loving father and Jane’s orphaned status; the rich and sensual materiality of the furnishings in that room; the implications there of mortality and immortality; the terror accompanying those implications: all make her a representative figure; all translate into the metaphysical loss, alienation, and existential anxiety experienced on a larger scale in the modern world. In this allegorical context, Jane is the archetypal outsider, like Lucy Snowe an outcast, a “heretic,” or as Jane

says, a “heterogeneous thing,” these identifying terms, in Eliade’s definition of “difference,” giving her the weight of sacred status.

Turning away from the death bed, she looks into the mirror: “All looked colder and darker in that visionary hollow than in reality.” In her own reflection she sees a spiritualized reality, “like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp Bessie’s evening stories represented as coming out of lone, ferny dells in moors, and appearing before the eyes of belated travelers” (21; ch. 2). Jane is one of those travelers, who in the night imagines the spirit of her surrogate father returning to this sacred chamber “to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed [. . .]; a preternatural voice to comfort me, or elicit from the gloom some haloed face, bending over me with strange pity” (24; ch. 2). Aware, however, that such a literal resolution to her suffering is impossible – “the idea, consolatory in theory, I felt would be terrible if realized” – she ends that episode by mediating and transforming her childish supernatural notion into a more abstract idea – “I thought the swift-darting beam [of light] was a herald of some vision from another world” (24; ch. 2) – that thought, in fact a harbinger of a visionary experience at novel’s end in which she hears Rochester voice calling to her from his distant manor house at Ferndean.

The transformative experience in the red-room frees Jane to come forward, identify herself by name, and tell her story to the sympathetic Mr. Lloyd, but not before the adult narrator informs the reader that she held back many factual details in answering his questions. Editing her story, as the narrator announces she will do in her autobiography, Jane, despite her omissions, “[contrives]” in this

instance also “to frame a [. . .] true response” (31; ch. 3), and soon after that interview, this time without “at all deliberating on [her] words,” she answers Mrs. Reed’s claim that she is a liar by speaking the uninhibited truth for the first time:

I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I love *you*; but I declare I do not love you: I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world except John Reed; and this book about the liar, you may give to your girl Georgiana, for it is she who tells lies, and not I. (45; ch. 4).

[. . .] I will never call you aunt again as long as I live. [. . .] and if any one asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say [. . .] you treated me with miserable cruelty. (45; ch. 4)

And to Mrs. Reed’s question, “how dare you affirm that Jane,” she answers,

How dare I, Mrs. Reed? How dare I? Because it is the *truth*.
[. . .] People think you are a good woman, but you are bad; hard-hearted. *You are deceitful!* (45; ch. 4)

Speaking the truth empowers her: “Ere, I had finished this reply, my soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph, I ever felt. It seemed as if an invisible bond had burst, and that I had struggled out into unhopd-for liberty” (46; ch. 4). On the other hand, Jane’s condemnatory words, like many prophetic utterances of old, inspire fear in Mrs. Reed, who both recognizes and denies their authenticity, and who, at the end of her life describes the terrifying impact they had on her guilty imagination: “I could not forget my

own sensations when you thus started up and poured out the venom of your mind: I felt fear as if an animal that I had struck or pushed had looked up at me with human eyes and cursed me in a man's voice" (268; ch. 21). And, indeed, the reader learns only in retrospect that she fears for good reason, that the Calvinist tract given, to Jane by Mr. Brocklehurst, "containing the sudden death of the Liar" does not predict Jane's death but the eventual "sudden death" of Mrs. Reed, whose sin of duplicity against Jane, Mr. Reed, and their children is certainly implicated in her illness and demise. As Eliza Reed observes, "With her constitution she should have lived to a good old age: her life was shortened by trouble" (269; ch.21).

All of Brontë's novels treat falsification in various forms, and in *Villette*, as well as *Jane Eyre*, she raises the question of linguistic misrepresentation by noting words that have lost their original meaning. Calling attention to the novel's focus on the spiritual and cultural alienation of its characters and the civilization it describes, Lucy Snowe says, in the opening passage of *Villette*, that whatever connection exists between the Bretton family name and the ancient town of Bretton has faded from present memory. As in *Jane Eyre*, we see that the opening passage of Brontë's mythopoeically constructed work contains coded allusions to the remaining symbolic narrative. For example, the first sentence of the passage does more than locate character and physical place -- "My godmother lived in a handsome house in the clean and ancient town of Bretton"; it points, as well, to a loss of historical memory and to the diminution of values in the town and family

whose ancient traditions have been wiped “clean”; and to the misleading designation of “godmother” given Louisa Bretton, whose traditional Christian role as a spiritual leader has been secularized into the representation of an “English, middle-class gentlewoman,” incapable of fulfilling that function for her goddaughter, Lucy Snowe, because, as Lucy well knows, she “does not comprehend the rule of the great deep” (254; 21).

Although Jane specifies two commonly used words that seem empty to her, she does not analyze or speculate about them, but gives the reader, instead, the task of re-+establishing their original meanings. She is rightly skeptical, however, when Mr. Brocklehurst refers to Mrs. Reed as her “benefactress”: “Benefactress! benefactress! said I, inwardly: they all call Mrs. Reed my benefactress; if so, a benefactress is a disagreeable thing” (41; ch.4). How else can she evaluate the term when Mrs. Reed’s self-consideration, especially with regard to her ward, counters the derivation of that word, which in the Latin, *bene facere*, would claim her to be “a well doer, one who bestows a benefit or a blessing, a friendly helper.” In fact, she treats Jane “with miserable cruelty,” judging her a fiendish liar, “a compound of virulent passions, mean spirit, and dangerous duplicity” (268; ch. 21)), while Jane owes Mrs. Reed “fearful pangs of mental suffering,” and the onerous consequences of her betrayed interests. Having denied Jane her rightful inheritance, Mrs. Reed gives the following reason for her malice: “Because I disliked you too fixedly and thoroughly ever to lend a hand in lifting you to prosperity” (268; ch. 21).

At Lowood, the school she is sent to by Mrs. Reed, the words on the stone

tablet above the door give Jane pause:

Lowood Institution – This portion was rebuilt AD – by Naomi Brocklehurst, of Brocklehurst Hall, in this county. “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. -- St. Matt. v.16.”
(59; ch. 5)

Attempting to “penetrate” the “import” of this inscription, Jane “[ponders] the signification of the word ‘Institution’ [and endeavors] to make out a connection between the tablet’s first words and the verse of scripture [. . .]” (59; ch. 5). Again, as in her reading of Bewick, Jane indicates the premonitory signs, but the reader is asked to interpret and to make the connection between the meaning of “Institution” and the nature of Lowood Institution itself; between the dedication to the “benefactress” Naomi Brocklehurst and the quotation from St. Matthew literally stating the Christian definition of “benefaction.” The Latin *institutare*, meaning “to start, to found, to set up, to establish,” suggests that Jane’s focus on the word “institution,” repeats the reference made earlier to the importance of beginnings and, as one of those beginnings, introduces a second reference to John Calvin’s doctrine of Christian reform, the “Institutes of the Christian Religion.” Both the Latin term and Calvin’s use of “Institutes” make it clear that in its application to Lowood -- in this context, the low church -- its original definition and its relationship to actual reformation have been rendered meaningless. Founded as a “charity” for the orphaned daughters of the clergy, the brutal reality of this Calvinist institution, contrasted with the charitable function it purports to

serve, violates the meaning of a word which the Christian lexicon identifies with God's love to man and the Holy Spirit. (OED) As for Naomi Brocklehurst -- hardly the wise mother her biblical first name suggests³² -- she is the antithesis of St. Matthew's definition of charity. Ruled by vanity and self-indulgence, she and her daughters are the bearers of those sins which Mr. Brocklehurst hypocritically and wrongly attributes to his hapless young pupils.

Christian charity, the Calvinist creed of personal faith, its covenant of grace, and virtues of thrift, chastity, and industry are distorted by Mr. Brocklehurst into weapons of tyranny. His sense of entitlement, displayed in the luxurious dress and the arrogant conduct of his family during their visit to Lowood, his sympathetic alliance with Mrs. Reed, his contempt for the charity children of Lowood, his reference to the covenant of grace in his diatribe against indulging those children: are all grounds for concluding that he follows the theology of predestination, which, according to Karen Armstrong, was not at the heart of John Calvin's thought, but became for his reformist heirs "the distinguishing mark of Calvinism" (282-83). There is enough evidence in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* to speculate that Charlotte Brontë would have agreed with Armstrong's view claiming that the latter-day practitioners of Calvinism "wanted to present Christianity as a coherent and rational system that could be derived from syllogistic deductions based on known axioms":

[Their] theology of predestination showed what could happen
when the paradox and mystery of God were no longer regarded

as poetry but were interpreted with a coherent but terrifying logic.

[. . .] The “God” of the Bible ceases to be a symbol of a transcendent reality, and becomes a cruel and despotic tyrant. (283)

In fact, Mr. Brocklehurst fits Calvin’s description of the “profane man”: He “[precipitates]” himself into “evil actions,” “not considering what is [God’s], but [is] inflamed with the violence of his passions.”³³ These are evident in the enforced “Silence” and “Order” in which the Lowood pupils conduct their morning ablutions, and in a rationing of food, warmth, and emotional comfort so extreme that they are “semi-starved,” subject to disease, abandoned and loveless: in the cold early morning, faint with hunger, they are made to endure “protracted readings of chapters in the Bible” before they are allowed to eat the “nauseous mess [of] burnt porridge [. . .] almost as bad as rotten potatoes [such that] famine itself soon sickens over it,” and then, “although none had breakfasted, [t]hanks being returned for what we had not got [. . .]” (56; ch. 1).

Apparent also is the violence of Mr. Reed’s language, its fierceness thinly veiled by a veneer of scripture and theology. Admonishing Maria Temple for indulging the pupils with an extra meal of bread and cheese, he advises her of her duty to instruct them according to his misconstrued version of Calvinist doctrine:

A brief address on those occasions would not be mistimed,
Wherein a judicious instructor would take the opportunity of
referring to the sufferings of the primitive Christians; to the
torments of martyrs; to the exhortations of our blessed Lord
himself, calling upon his disciples to take up their cross and

follow him,³⁴ to his warnings that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;³⁵ to his divine consolations, “if ye suffer hunger or thirst for my sake, happy are ye.” Oh madam, when you put bread and cheese, instead of burnt porridge into these children’s mouths, you may indeed feed their vile bodies, but you little think how you starve their immortal souls. (74-5; ch. 7)

And noting the naturally curled red hair of one pupil and the top knots and plaits of others, he uses theology as his motive for acting out his violent nature: “we are not to conform to nature: I wish these girls to be the children of Grace” (75; ch. 7), and with that covenant as his rationalization, he compels them to turn their faces to the wall and gives the order: “All those top-knots must be cut off” (76; ch. 7). In response to Maria Temple’s remonstrance he says, “I have a Master to serve whose kingdom is not of this world:³⁶ my mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh; to teach them to clothe themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair and costly apparel” (75-76; ch. 1). His specious reference to the term “Grace” and his own hypocrisy are pointed out by Jane after his wife and daughters enter the room: “They ought to have come a little sooner to have heard his lecture on dress, for they were splendidly attired in velvet, silk and furs; [. . .]the elder lady was enveloped in a costly velvet shawl, trimmed with ermine and she wore a false front of French curls” (76; ch. 1).

The Calvinist principles of “mutual correction and edification” and “chastisement in mercy” are desecrated also by the fury of Mr. Brocklehurst’s

disciplinary system, and Jane, and Helen Burns more than any other, are victims of its pitiless violence. Forced to stand in the center of the school room as a punishment for some minor carelessness, Helen bears her disgrace with the self-control of a Christian stoic, while Jane, who is publicly accused of being a “liar,” a “castaway,” a servant of the “Evil One” (78; ch. 1), and set apart from the others as an outcast, is angered and humiliated by the injustice of those accusations and by the violence of Mr. Brocklehurst’s language, which is even more strident than before:

My dear children [. . .], this is a sad, a melancholy occasion; for it becomes my duty to warn you, that this girl [. . .] is [. . .] not a member of the true flock, but evidently an interloper and an alien. [. . .] Teachers you must watch her: keep your eyes on her movements, weigh well her words, scrutinize her actions, punish her body to save her soul, if indeed such salvation be possible, for (my tongue falters while I tell it) this girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut -- this girl is -- a liar! (78; ch. 7)

His acknowledgment of “the pious and charitable” “benefactress” Mrs. Reed as the source of his information about Jane irrevocably indicts Mr. Brocklehurst as a false prophet, unable to distinguish between good and evil, truth and lie, present realities and future events. As it does with Mrs. Reed, the tract “containing the sudden death of the Liar” resonates as a prognostication of

death, in this case the political death of Mr. Brocklehurst, who in historical company with those false prophets exposed by Micaiah's prophecy, is revealed as the real "servant and agent" of evil, and ultimately brought down by that awful truth.

Seeking her own truth, Jane questions Helen Burns about her concept of truth. Particularly, she wonders about Helen's passive acceptance of the cruel and unjust punishment imposed on her by their teacher, Miss Scatcherd. In response, Helen refers to the Gospels, these and *Rasselas* being the Christian and secular texts informing her doctrine of stoicism, her vision of good and evil, justice, forgiveness, and redemption, material and spiritual existence. Influenced by her faith and theology, she juxtaposes patient endurance and compassion for her assailants with harsh Calvinist strictures directed pitilessly against herself; and an enlightened view of salvation with a mystical Christian vision of the afterlife of the soul. Despite the severity of Miss Scatcherd's chastisements, she believes it is her duty to "return good for evil" (Matthew 5-7),³⁷ by her forbearance, to prevent evil against others who would suffer the consequences of her angry responses. However, she justifies her own harsh treatment by attributing it to her "wretchedly defective nature" :

I am, as Miss Scatcherd said, slatternly; I seldom put, and never keep, things in order; I am careless; I forget rules; I read when I should learn my lessons; I have no method; and sometimes I say, like you, I cannot *bear* to be subjected to

systematic arrangements. This is all very provoking to Miss Scatcherd, who is naturally neat, punctual, and particular. (67; ch. 6)

Certain aspects of Helen's creed will serve Jane well. In the process of discovering her own creed, she comes to understand Mrs. Reed's antipathy for her otherness, to forgive her cruelty, and to transcend her childhood rage against her and her kind -- "If they did not love me, in fact, as little did I love them. They were not bound to regard with affection a thing that could not sympathize with one amongst them" (23; ch. 2). But until then, the young child must speak out and enact the unmediated truth. As she says to Helen, she would feel, in her place, compelled to "strike back again very hard; [. . .] so hard as to teach the person who struck [me] never to do it again"³⁸ (68; ch. 5)

While Helen's religious faith is true, one detects threads of doubt, longing, and, on one occasion, what seems uncharacteristic outrage in the depths of her soul. She responds to Jane's question about her future plans by maintaining that "nobody can be sure of the future" (66; ch. 5), on the surface a truism, but with that claim, intimating that she may be uncertain about the soul's immortality and that, unlike Jane, she lacks prophetic vision. Seeming to discern a kindred spirit in Charles I, the sacrificed Catholic king, she regrets that he could neither read the immediate present -- "he could see not farther than the prerogatives of the crown" -- nor "look the distance and see how what they call the spirit of the age was tending" (68; ch. 5). As Jane makes clear, the same may be said for Helen, who, always in an "absorbed" and "abstracted" stare, barely notices the world around her: "her sight is turned in, gone down into her heart; she is looking at what she

can remember, I believe; not at what is really present" (62; ch. 5). Thus she shares the consequence of the King's blind denial. She becomes like him the innocent victim of institutional murder, her death from typhoid fever the result of poor sanitary conditions at Lowood. However, she excuses and justifies her own murder, while accusing with indignation the perpetrators of the historical crime committed against a man who "wished to do right": "yes, his enemies were the worst: they shed blood they had no right to shed. How dared they kill him!" (68; ch. 6)

Both Charles and Helen are the victims of their own passivity and insufficiency, he allowing others to forge his policy,³⁹ and she, always the passive suppliant, unable to actively forge a life or create happiness on earth, confirming on her deathbed, "by dying young I shall escape great sufferings" (94-95; ch. 9). In *Shirley*, it is Mrs. Yorke who denies her daughter's talents and her daughter who insists on them, while here, although her intellectual and spiritual talent are considerable, Helen denies them herself, saying on her deathbed, "I had not qualities or talents to make my way very well in the world: I should have been continually at fault!" (94-95; ch. 9) In the throes of death she finds peace: her doubt, longing, and outrage assuaged, she is "very happy," "[her] mind at rest" knowing that she is going "to [her] long home -- [her] last home" (94; ch. I: 9). She can now say without ambivalence, "I am sure there is a future state; I believe God is good; I can resign my immortal part to him without any misgiving. God is my father; God is my friend: I love him; I believe he loves me" (95; ch. 9).

More than Helen, Maria Temple seems in the beginning a model for Jane

to follow. As her name suggests, she is important to the allegorical narrative because she represents the ideal: a type of Mary, a sister of mercy, a sacred cloister in which to worship. To Helen, she seems mild, rational, intellectual, full of goodness and generosity of spirit; and on reflection to the adult Jane, “she had always something of serenity in her air, of state in her mien, of refined propriety in her language which precluded deviation into the ardent, the excited, the eager: something which chastened the pleasure of those who looked on her and listened to her, by a controlling sense of awe” (85; ch. 8). Although Jane is saddened by Miss Temple’s departure from Lowood -- “she had been my continual solace; she had stood me in the stead of mother, governess, and latterly, companion” (98; ch. 10) -- she recognizes in her absence that “[her] mind [has] put off all that it borrowed of Miss Temple”:

I had imbibed from her something of her nature and much of her habits: more harmonious thoughts: what seemed better regulated feelings had become the inmates of my mind. I had given in allegiance to duty and order; I was quiet; I believed I was content: to the eyes of others, usually even to my own, I appeared a disciplined and subdued character. (98; ch. 10)

Now “left in [her] natural element,” and transformed by her freedom from Maria Temple’s considerable influence, she plans her own departure from Lowood, “[remembering] that the real world was wide, and that a varied field of hopes and fears, of sensations and excitements, awaited those who had courage to go forth into its expanse to seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils”

(99; ch. 10). In fact, in neither Helen Burns nor Maria Temple has Jane discovered the truth she is seeking. She can imagine no comfort, as Helen did, in the promise of an afterworld – “this world is pleasant – it would be dreary to be called from it, and to have to go who knows where” (92; ch. 9) – or find any enduring model in the sensible and forbearing Maria Temple – “it did not seem as if a prop were withdrawn, but rather as if a motive were gone” (99; ch. 10).

The battle between immediate happiness and truth occurs at Thornfield Hall, where Jane’s integrity is tested by her love for Rochester, by his deception of self, Jane, church, and society, and her own commitment to truth. That conflict between desire and truth, raised as an issue in Jane’s conversation with Helen Burns, is heightened in the present by Rochester’s contradictory and often perverse responses. A divided being like Hunsden Yorke Hunsden in *The Professor* and Mr. Yorke in *Shirley*, Rochester, too, is enlightened and narrow minded, sensitive and callous, truthful and deceitful, honorable and abusive; however, as Brontë conceives him, he is not only a more romanticized figure, but in his conflict between good and evil, a being apart from the passive antiheroic characters of the other two novels.

While critics generally agree that he can be most fruitfully interpreted as a Gothic and/or Byronic figure, and feminist critics, in particular, view him as a figure shaped by the gender distinctions of Victorian culture, Brontë’s representation of him both parallels and subverts these prototypes of the Romantic hero, and informs his character with meaning beyond the specifics of

psychological and gender-based considerations. Making the case that “Brontë is overturning the conventions of Gothic romance” in her characterization of Rochester, Donald Stone observes that a Radcliffe novel would have presented him as “a Bluebeard, locking up his innocent, defenseless wives” (116), claiming rightly with this observation that Brontë’s vision is more complex than that of the Gothic author, and leaving room for the claim that her vision is more fitting to her time than recent critical judgments about Rochester’s “gender authorized despotism” (Meyer 112) or his “complicity in the destruction of Berthe Mason’s spirit”⁷⁴⁰ Showalter 74) would allow.

In fact, Brontë gives compelling and substantive reasons for Berthe’s imprisonment, suggesting in her portrayal of daemonic madness that Berthe represents a dangerous dissolution of civilized values, or, as Stone claims, “romantic energy at its most willful and uncontrolled, *la bête humaine* personified” (116). Psychoanalytic interpreters translate this idea into sexual and aggressive energy out of control, claiming that Berthe Mason personifies the id unmediated by the civilizing constraints of ego. Further they claim that Berthe represents Jane’s dark self, and, in fact, Brontë seems to justify their view by showing that for reasons considered well within the realm of civilized Victorian behavior, Rochester imprisons Jane as well as Berthe by insisting on her presence, controlling her movement, deceiving her, and imposing on her his own vision of romantic love.

However, Fletcher’s discussion of the *doppelgänger* substantiates the claim

made here that despite their apparent psychological connection, Jane and Berthe are allegorical and not strictly psychological figures. He makes a distinction between psychological and allegorical projection, rendering the psychological as a mechanism of defense, and the allegorical as a means of “shaping our outer world” (27n). According to Fletcher, “Ralph Tymms has shown in detail how Hoffman and others developed the idea of the *doppelgänger* with such psychological precision that the allegorical character of their writing is not apparent” (185). Fletcher’s observation that “the antitheses on which the German Romantic double is based are always antitheses of good and evil” (185), and therefore allegorical in kind, applies to the one-ideal nature of Berthe’s character as the evil principle personified, and the idea posed here of Jane’s character as the embodiment of the prophet who announces the truth.

Jane’s claim on and for Rochester suggests that their love and his character also exist on a plane beyond psychological interpretation. As the narrator tells us, she worships him with a religious fervor, dangerously close to idolatry (Moglen 130), but as he fails to meet her standard of truth, she judges and finally rejects his argument on a moral plane more elevated than his pragmatic plea for sufficient good. Acknowledging her ideal expectations of Rochester, the narrator describes the terms of her vision:

My future husband was becoming to me my whole world;
and more than the world: almost my hope of heaven. He
stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse
intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those

days, see God for his creature: of whom I had made an idol.

(307; ch. 24)

And when she thinks he intends to marry Blanche and that she must leave Thornfield, she expresses a sense of loss so profound that it seems to her tantamount to the death of her soul:

I love Thornfield [. . .] because I have [. . .] not been [. . .] excluded from every glimpse of communion with what is bright and energetic, and high. I have talked, face to face, with what I reverence; with what I delight in, -- with an original, a vigorous, an expanded mind. I have known you, Mr Rochester; and it strikes me with terror and anguish to feel I absolutely must be torn from you for ever. I see the necessity of departure; and it is like looking on the necessity of death. (283; ch. 23)

Rochester presents his case against her final departure with compelling logic: "Is it better to drive a fellow creature to despair than to transgress a mere human law -- no man being injured by the breach?" (356; ch. 27) Arguing for living outside the strictures of Victorian society, his character conforms to its Byronic counterparts, and, in fact, as Stone and others have shown, Brontë borrows for his character many other defining features from Byron's heroes, their prototypes categorized by Stone as "the Don Juan figure, the romantic adventurer, the man of destiny and the defier of convention" (62-63). On the surface, Rochester is all of these, but as formal conventions of the novel prescribe, Brontë subverts and complicates these Romantic categories by giving them a realistic as

well as a visionary context, by attributing his degradation and despair, his rebellion against convention, and his self-indulgent escapades to the psychological trauma of forced exile, forced marriage, and forced responsibility, and by pointing out his failure to transcend the harsh realities of his personal history. Stone argues that she minimizes his Byronic qualities by making him fit for life in the Victorian world, but one can also argue that in giving Jane allegorical significance, Brontë attaches to Rochester's psychological motivations a tragic and supra-human dimension,⁴¹ which after the revelation of his fall, Jane honors with what he describes as divine pity and love.

Neither of these, however, will keep Jane in a paradise torn apart by the sin of deception, for as she embodies and seeks truth, she knows that Rochester's deceptions, like Berthe Mason's degradation, are profane: "never more could [my love] turn to him; for faith was blighted -- confidence destroyed! [. . .] Mr. Rochester was not to me what he had been; for he was not what I had thought him. [. . .] the attribute of stainless truth was gone from his idea [. . .]" (331; ch. 26). She hears the voice of her conscience requiring her to make the necessary sacrifice for the sake of truth: "you shall yourself, pluck out your right eye: yourself cut off your right hand: your heart shall be the victim; and you the priest to transfix it" (335; ch.27).

The idea proposed by many critics that these symbolic amputations prophesy the final wounds to Rochester's eyes and left arm is vital to this reading of the novel's ending, but what is unmentioned in their discussions is Brontë's reference to the right and/or left sides for the third time in this novel: the first

time in the Bewick passage; the second, in the red-room passage; and this, the third time, in words taken from the sermon on the mount. All three are sacred markers for Jane's quest for truth, the last referring to Christ's redefinition of the sin of adultery (Mason 524) -- "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"-- and to Jane, who courts adultery, and Rochester, who is an adulterer, as representations of that definition: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell./And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast *it* from thee [. . .]" (Matthew 5:28-30). As in the first two passages, however, there is in this symbolic isolation of the right side an acknowledgment of Rochester as Jane's protector and haven, of Jane's moral obligation to sever herself from the safety of that haven, and of the heretic and dangerous path that her priestly function requires her to take in the name of truth. Doing battle between "Conscience," "Reason," and "Feeling," between love, self-truth, and moral necessity, Jane defeats her inclination to submit to Rochester in words that clarify the lines of contention between them:

*I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless,
the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself.
I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will
hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not
mad -- as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times*

when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this,
 when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour; stringent
 are they; inviolate they shall be. If at my individual convenience I
 might break them, what would be their worth? They have a worth --
 so I have always believed; and if I cannot believe it now, it is because
 I am insane [. . .] (356; ch. 27)

Since expectations about religious and civil morality have become more liberal in the twentieth century, modern readers undoubtedly would not object on strictly moral grounds to Rochester's deceptions of Jane. At worst they seem like willful and perverse games meant to prove his superior power, but as the narrative unfolds, they reveal themselves more accurately to be the consequence of layer upon layer of subterfuge not so easily undone. On the occasion of their very first encounter on the lonely country causeway, Rochester questions Jane about her identity, for no apparent reason keeping his own identity secret. Unaware that he is her employer and the owner of Thornfield, Jane casually remarks that their encounter was of "no moment," but prior to entering the Hall where Rochester is now ensconced, she reads in nature the sign that a transformative experience is about to occur:

both my eyes and my spirit seemed drawn from the gloomy
 house [. . .] to that sky expanded before me, -- a blue sea
 absolved from taint of cloud; the moon ascending it in
 solemn march; her orb seemed to look up as she left the hill
 tops, from behind which she had come, far and farther below

her, and aspired to the zenith, midnight dark in its fathomless depth and measureless distance: and for those trembling stars that followed her course, they made my heart tremble, my veins glow when I viewed them. (133; ch. 12)

Jane acknowledges her belief in the power and “mystery” of such signs, speculating that they “may be but the sympathies of Nature with man” (248; ch. 21). And for Lucy Snowe too, such signs in nature inspire and inform imagination, giving her the purpose and strength to “leave this wilderness” “and go out hence,” guiding her along the way: “I mentally saw within reach what I had never yet beheld with my bodily eyes; I saw London” (104; ch. 5). In both visions, the language carries religious connotation, in Lucy’s reference to the wilderness as the sterile world deprived of God, and to London as the New Jerusalem; and in Jane’s reference to the pure blue expanse of ethereal sky, “absolved from taint,” the “ascending” moon reaching for the summit, promising rebirth and transcendence at the privileged hour, the light from the stars showing the way. If Jane is yet unaware, the reader is able to surmise from these signs that her meeting with Rochester will move her into a new realm of experience and ultimately change her destiny.

Jane’s passage, however, will continue to be difficult, as the name “Thornfield” implies, and we see that after his harmless omission, Rochester’s deceptions become increasingly elaborate and egregious. Having been saved by Jane from Berthe’s murderous attempt to torch his bed, he speaks to her in the language of love, literally seducing her with the intensity of his passion:

I knew [. . .] you would do me good in some way, at some time; --
 I saw it in your eyes when I first beheld you: their expression and
 smile did not [. . .] strike delight to my very inmost heart so for
 nothing. People talk of natural sympathies. I have heard of good
 genii: -- there are grains of truth in the wildest fable. My cherished
 preserver, good-night! (171; ch. 15)

Jane responds to these words with love and the yet submerged hope of a lasting union between them -- "I saw [. . .] a shore sweet as the hills of Beulah" (172; ch. 15) -- and although Rochester recognizes her authentic qualities -- she has proved herself an intelligent, loving, and invaluable friend -- he abandons his "cherished preserver" to woo Blanche Ingram, whose considerable beauty and accomplishment are eclipsed by her cruelty and narrow design to marry Rochester for his fortune. Informed by Mrs. Fairfax of Blanche's advantages, Jane "[pronouces] the judgment" on herself, and by implication on Rochester, the one telling her "sweet lies," "[t]hat a greater fool than Jane Eyre had never breathed the breath of life: that a more fantastic idiot had never surfeited herself on sweet lies and swallowed poison as if it were nectar" (183; ch. 16).

Surmising that she has been excluded from the ideal world she imagines to be Rochester, Jane seeks power through the truth and magic of her art, drawing on both by sketching separate portraits, one of herself which she calls "Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor and plain," and the other of "Blanche, an accomplished lady of rank" (184; ch. 16). Not in the images themselves, but in the act of reproducing the images and arresting the contrast between them, she

temporarily gains what seems a magic power over herself, over Blanche, and Rochester:

Ere long, I had reason to congratulate myself on the course of wholesome discipline to which I had thus formed my feelings to submit: thanks to it, I was able to meet subsequent occurrences with a decent calm; which had they found me unprepared, I should probably have been unequal to maintain, even externally.
(184; ch. 16)

Fletcher cites Fenichel's psychoanalytic theory to explain the allegorical relationship between magic and such representation. According to Fenichel, "thing-representatives [. . .] are 'possessions'; that is they are mastered by the ego; they are an attempt to endow the things with 'ego quality' for the purpose of achieving mastery over them" (295). Making the same point to explain the function of personification, Fletcher restates the theory to include the practice of imitative magic as a means of "[bringing] real events which the magician wants to control into parallel with symbolic events which are under his direct control" (188).

The task of reproducing her likeness and that of Blanche gives temporary "force and fixedness to the new impressions [Jane wishes] to stamp indelibly on [her] heart" (184; ch. 16). But for Jane, magic is not an enduring power; its spell soon undone, she is repeatedly made to suffer the consequences of Rochester's omissions, inventions, and lies. On the occasion of Blanche Ingram's arrival at Thornfield, he requires Jane to appear at a gathering of his guests, but in her

presence flirts openly with Blanche, while ignoring Jane and exposing her to the visible and audible scorn of his guests. To entertain themselves, they propose a game of charades, a term that Jane does not know for good reason, since its meanings of play-acting and absurd pretense are antithetical to her temperament and principle of being. As we saw in *Villette*, Brontë often uses performance as a “model” for the underlying inauthenticity she describes in her narratives, and to reveal their allegorical content: in *Villette*, in Lucy’s and Genevieve’s enactment of the fop and the coquette, and in the passionate performance by Vashti reflecting Lucy’s psychic drama; and in *Jane Eyre*, in the form of three pantomimes representing different perspectives on marriage “in dumb show.” The first of the three represents a marriage ceremony with Blanche Ingram as bride and Rochester as groom; the second an allusion to Isaac’s proposal of marriage to Rebecca, their marriage and Isaac’s gift of jewels to his bride sanctified by God; and the third, a prison scene in which a desperate Rochester sits bound in chains. The participants in the game must interpret the scenes, and although Jane refers to them as “diviners,” they are unable to divine their true meaning, their failure underlined by Blanche’s telling misreading of the final tableau as a vulgar type of gothic romance:

Do you know [. . .] that of the three characters, I like you in the last best? Oh had you lived but a few years earlier, what a gallant gentleman-highwayman you would have made. [. . .]
An English hero of the road would be the next best thing to an

Italian bandit; and that could only be surpassed by a Levantine pirate.

(208; ch. 3)

Only the reader discerns in retrospect what Blanche cannot fathom: that each enacted tableau refers to Rochester's deceptions: the first to his declared intention to marry Blanche, to his marriage to Berthe, and to the mock ceremony of his marriage to Jane; the second to his desacralization of marriage, represented by the "magnificent bracelets and earrings" laying at [Blanche's] feet, tainted by greed (207; ch. 3); and the third to Rochester's searing punishment for crimes committed against God and humankind.

Without knowing the outcome of his intention to marry Blanche, Jane knows the truth about his shallow relationship with Blanche and her set, and about the deep connection between Rochester and herself. Indeed their allegorical function is driven home by their pronouncements that they are connected as one being: Rochester as the "idea" of "stainless truth" in Jane's head, and Jane as the idea of a savior and his creature in his. Her words acknowledging their bond evoke in more measured form the words that Cathy Linton speaks in *Wuthering Heights* to describe her bond to Heathcliff. "Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same" (62; ch. IX), Cathy says, while Jane matches her words with the claim that "[Rochester] is not to them what he is to me [. . .]": he is not of their kind:

I believe he is of mine; -- I am sure he is, -- I feel akin to him, --

I understand the language of his countenance and movements;

though rank and wealth sever us widely I have something in my

brain and heart, in my blood and nerves that assimilate me mentally to him. (198; ch. 17).

On his side, just before he declares his love for Jane, Rochester acknowledges, in language equally passionate and prescient, the sympathetic bond which Jane describes:

Are you anything akin to me, do you think, Jane?

[. . .] Because [. . .] I sometimes have a queer feeling with regard to you -- especially when you are near me, as now: it is as if I had a string somewhere under my left ribs, tightly and inextricably knotted to a similar string situated in the corresponding quarter of your little frame. And if that boisterous channel, and two hundred miles or so of land come broad between us, I am afraid that cord of communion will be snapt; and then I've a nervous notion I should take to bleeding inwardly. (283; ch 23)

The penultimate performance -- the final one being the ceremony of his marriage to Jane -- reveals much about Rochester's psychological knowledge of Jane, but much also about his failure to know that particular "something" in her "brain and heart, in [her] blood and nerves." Secretly disguised as a gypsy woman, he proposes to read the fortunes of his female guests. Prior to the reading, Blanche and the other guests consider the idea an "excellent sport," and name the reader a "fortune teller," a "low impostor," a "real sorceress." But having been informed by the disguised Rochester during the reading that he is not a wealthy man, Blanche pronounces him "a witch" "in close alliance" with the

devil, while prior to her reading, and with equal inaccuracy, Jane names him a “sybyl,” or prophetess, and to be sure, although he is unable to discern the indelible and deeply felt truth of Jane’s moral imagination, he does have considerable insight into the more accessible expressions of her conflict. About Jane he says,

Reason sits firm and holds the reins, and will not let the feelings burst away and hurry her to wild chasms. The passions may rage furiously, like true heathens, as they are; and the desires may imagine all sorts of vain things; but judgment shall still have the last word in every argument, and the casting vote in every decision. (227; ch. 19)

Knowing neither the fortuneteller’s identity, nor in a connotative sense, Rochester’s true identity, Jane is taken aback by the passion and familiarity of the stranger’s words. Truth and reality becoming indistinguishable for the moment, she asks the Keatsean questions, “Where was I? Did I wake or sleep? Had I been dreaming? Did I dream still?”⁴² (212; ch. 18). While in the case of Keat’s visionary, the sudden reality of his own sad utterance awakens him from his dream -- Forlorn! The very word is like hell/To toll me back from thee to my sole self!” -- the mock-marriage ceremony between Rochester and Jane will be the rude awakening she needs to separate the longing and the dream from the true matter of her quest, the catalyst that will literally drive her from the temple into the wilderness.

The reading over, his disguise revealed, Rochester announces that “the play is played out” (227; ch. 19) without realizing that there are yet two scenes to

perform, both based on fiction but disguised as reality: the first, his courtship of Jane, and the second, the mock marriage scene ritualizing his past deceits in a desacralized ceremony. Despite the apparent accuracy of his prognostications, his blind desire for Jane and attempt to seduce and control her make it clear that he has not really understood the nature of her soul, a failure of imagination reflected in Jane's response to his final justification for "daring the world's opinion" "to [. . .] [secure] his own peace of mind and regeneration of life" (246; ch. 20). Jane names a higher authority than world opinion or any single individual as the arbiter of her morality:

a Wanderer's response or a Sinner's reformation should never depend on a fellow-creature. Men and women die, philosophers falter in wisdom, and Christians in goodness: if any one you know has suffered and erred, let him look higher than his equals for strength to amend, and solace to heal. (246; ch. 20)

Until the revelatory moment occurs, and during the period of her courtship, Jane comes gradually to know that Rochester does not recognize the truth of her nature, noting rather that he tends to trivialize her identity as the other figures in her life have done. As the living vessel of their obsessive projections, she is inevitably misread and misnamed by them, designated an actress and a liar by Mrs. Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst, considered self-pitying by Helen Burns, and too angry, too passionate, too desirous by Helen and later by St. John Rivers. Reduced by Rochester to an animal, a bird, a "pet lamb," or to an abstraction, a "sprite," a "fairy" "an elf," an "angel," a "saint," a dehumanized tool,

she responds passionately to the accretion of those epithets and his inability to see her truly:

Do you think I am an automaton? – a machine without feelings?
 And can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips,
 and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think,
 because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and
 heartless? – You think wrong! -- I have as much soul as you, --
 and full as much heart! [. . .] I am not talking to you through the
 medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh: --
 it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed
 through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal -- as we are.
 (284; ch. 23)

Thinking he will marry Blanche before the full truth of her nature is revealed to him, Jane goes on to reveal her premonitory power. Asserting her identity, she prepares to leave Thornfield, intimating thus her final departure: "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will; which I now exert to leave you" (284; ch. 23). She accuses Rochester of "[playing] a farce" (285; ch 223), responds to his proposal of marriage by mistakenly referring to Blanche but describing reality nevertheless -- "Your bride stands between us"-- and finally, in response to his questions -- "Do you doubt me [. . .]?" "You have no faith in me?" "Am I a liar in your eyes?" (285; ch. 223) -- she answers affirmatively, at this moment stating a truth that she has unconsciously known for some time.

When he offers her jewels as he had Blanche Ingram in the tableau, and “satin and lace and [. . .] roses in her hair and [. . .] a priceless veil” to cover her head, she refuses to perform as he would like and becomes “uneasy at the strain he had adopted: I felt he was deluding himself, or trying to delude me”:

And then you won't know me, sir: and I shall not be your Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin's jacket, -- and a jay in borrowed plumes. I would as soon see you, Mr. Rochester, tricked out in stage trappings, as myself clad in a court lady's robe. (291; ch. 24)

Rochester does not notice her “deprecation,” and in fact seems to notice far less than his ward, the seven or eight year old Adele. Telling her that he intends “to take mademoiselle to the moon [. . .] and mademoiselle shall live with me there, and only me,” Adele answers, “she is far better as she is [. . .]: besides, she would get tired of living with only you in the moon” (299; ch. 24). In response to Jane's declaration that she shall not be “crushed by crowded obligations” (302; ch. 24), but continue to be independent after their marriage, he moves from this “bathos of sentiment” (306; ch. 24) to a sexually fraught language of violence:

But listen [. . .] it is your time now, little tyrant, but it will be mine presently: and when once I have fairly seized you, to have and to hold, I'll just -- figuratively speaking -- attach you to a chain like this (touching his watch guard). Yes bonny weak thing, I'll wear you in my bosom, lest my jewel I should tyne. (303; ch. 24)

The first intimation of her ultimate betrayal comes to her in the form of an

anxious presentiment two days before the wedding ceremony, at a time when Rochester is absent from Thornfield. Once again she reads the signs in nature, and once again that language reveals its sacred source. The “black and riven” chestnut tree in the garden, “the trunk split down the centre [gaping] ghastly,” the fallen apples in the orchard, the “blood-red and half overcast moon” (309-10; ch. 25): all these the signifiers for a world marred by sin, and the sanctity and unity of life tragically broken. This vision is followed by two dreams, both occurring just before Berthe’s nocturnal visit to Jane’s bedroom, both revealing her “strange” “regretful consciousness” of Rochester’s sins, and the “barrier dividing” them. (315; ch. 25)

Jane has offered us the clue that we need to interpret both dreams. When she was a little girl, she heard and never forgot Bessie Leaven’s claim that to dream of children “was a sure sign of trouble,” as it might indicate the death of “one’s self or one’s kin” (248; ch. 21). In both dreams, Jane is in charge of a very young child, whom she carries in her arms; in both she is helpless to prevent Rochester’s departure. In the first dream, she is “inarticulate” and her movements “fettered”; while in the second and more detailed dream, she is hampered by a child whom she “might not lay [. . .] down anywhere, however tired [. . .] [her] arms – however much its weight [impedes] her progress [. . .].” In the background Thornfield Hall is in ruin, “nothing [remaining] but a shell-like wall, very high and very fragile looking.” Hearing the gallop of a horse, she climbs a wall to see Rochester gradually disappearing from her vision. The stones break under her feet and crumble, the terrified child “clings” to her, then “rolls from her

knee,” as she loses her own balance and falls. (314; ch. 25)

As Jane’s memory of Bessie’s comment and the texts of her dreams make clear, the terrified child in both dreams portends the death of her double, Berthe Mason, the ruin of Rochester, and of Thornfield, and the injury to Jane’s love, which she says, after learning the truth about Rochester’s previous marriage to Berthe, “shivered in my heart like a suffering child in a cold cradle” (330; ch. 16). But Jane has also instructed her readers to notice how words in earlier pages “[connect] themselves” and “[give] significance” to the signs which follow: Jane’s gathering fallen apples in the orchard and the “cloven” chestnut tree in the garden (309; ch. 25), with their attendant images of earth and heaven split by the sins of pride and deception; Rochester’s reference to Jane as a “strange” “almost unearthly thing” (286; ch. 23); in her master’s absence, Jane’s plea, “I wish he would come, I wish he would come!” (311; ch. 25); the repetition of the words, “atone,” (287; ch.23) and “station” (296; ch. 24); Rochester’s evocation of the fourteen images of Christ’s passion with the claim that “her station is in his heart and on the necks of those who would insult you, now or hereafter” (296; ch.24); his evocation of Christ, again, in his description of Jane as “friendless, cold and comfortless” (287; ch. 23), “the good little girl” whose love is pure (295; ch. 24), a “stray lamb” who “wandered out of the fold to seek [her] shepherd” (312; ch. 25); and, finally, his reference to the “last” “supper,” taken before the revelation of Christ’s betrayal. (312; ch. 25) These accumulating images lead to her dreams of sin and loss, the loss of Rochester, Jane’s fallen idol, and the falling child, Jane’s innocence brought down by Rochester’s sins of deceit and “pride.”

To move from her master to her “hierophant,” from Rochester to St. John Rivers, Jane must cross the moor between, which, like St. John himself, seems to her at first a holy sanctuary, a “golden desert,” then shifts and becomes the scene of her potential doom.⁴³ Looking on life as “a hopeless desert: tawny sands, with no green field, no palm-tree, no well in view” (228; ch. 12), Lucy Snowe enters the Catholic church to appeal to God, while Jane reads “His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence” (364; ch. 28) in Nature, both acts fulfilling their healing function temporarily, but harboring the seeds of Lucy’s and Jane’s destruction at their core. In need of comfort and affection, the Protestant Lucy might have succumbed to the comfort and the kindness of the Catholic priest, and having lost the external structure of civilization, Jane’s imagination becomes temporarily possessed by Rochester’s dehumanizing influence.⁴⁴ She longs to sink into the landscape – “I wished I could live in it and on it” – to metamorphose into an animal, to become one with nature: “I saw a lizard run over the crag; I saw a bee busy among the sweet bilberries. I would fain at the moment have become bee or lizard, that I might have found fitting nutriment, permanent shelter here” (364; ch. 28). When she feels the “chilling influence” of the “still frost,” the “night-wind,” the rain “wetting [her] to the skin” (371; ch. 28), that fantasy changes, as it must, for the desert, a temporary way station, is the sacred space where both God and reality must be sought. (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 285).

The light of the sun and the chiming church bell showing Jane the way out of the desert promise salvation, but lead her into the village where, as the Gospels tell us about Christ, she is rejected and turned away. Jane believes the second

sign to be an *ignis fatuus*, but in fact it is the light that guides her toward Moor House, St. John Rivers, his sisters, and the possibility of true salvation.

From one perspective St. John is the Christian alternative to Rochester's pagan character, and from another, he is as ignorant as Rochester of Jane's true nature. The two are juxtaposed in a pattern of similarity and difference throughout, starting with the symmetry in the scene at the threshold of the house where St. John Rivers appears out of the darkness to rescue Jane, and the scene on the causeway where Rochester emerges out of the dim twilight to be rescued by Jane. Their materialization before Jane's eyes suggests from the beginning that they are both manifestations of Jane's ideas and desire, and that their characters are thus weighted with allegorical significance. That one is rescued and one rescues is important to Jane's allegorical representation as a prophet, whose function to instruct and save the mortal soul from transgression applies to Rochester but not to St. John. Deeply and singularly committed to serving Christ, St. John is an autonomous being in every other respect. He wishes to marry Jane for one purpose only, so that in his missionary labours she can serve as his "docile, diligent, disinterested, faithful, constant courageous" [. . .] "very gentle, and very heroic" Christian agent. (449; ch. 34)

Rochester's "granite hewn features," his dark, "grim," daemonic looks are in sharp contrast with the beauty of St. John's "gentle" Grecian face, but both men, needing something from Jane which she cannot determine, fix their eyes on her and interrogate her closely, Rochester with his "full falcon-eye flashing" (305; ch. 24) and St. John with "a searching, decided steadfastness in his

gaze”(386; ch. 29). Rochester’s “[enigmatic]” discourse and his character are “beyond [her] penetration” (157; ch. 14), and though St. John’s eyes are “clear enough in a literal sense, [they are], in a figurative sense, difficult to fathom.” “He [seems] to use them rather as instruments to search other people’s thoughts, than as agents to reveal his own: the which combination of keenness and reserve [is] considerably more calculated to embarrass than to encourage” (387; ch. 29). Rochester’s power is in his primal force, his moodiness, his seductiveness, his fierce sexuality, all directed toward Jane in an attempt to win her love, while St. John River’s power is in his intellect, his ambition, his will – “you would think him gentle, yet in some things he is inexorable as death” (399; ch. 30) – and in the fervor of his Calvinist sermons, all of which he calls on to convert Jane to his apostolic mission to serve Christ, his “captain” (396; ch. 30), and the “church militant” (393; ch. 30).

Having sacrificed all to become the good missionary, his love for the “rose of the world” and his worldly ambition “for the more exciting toils of a literary career -- for the destiny of an artist, author, orator,” the power of a “politician,” the “glory” of a “soldier” (404; ch. 31)– St. John demands that Jane do the same, that she “rise” and follow him into “mission warfare,” despite her claim that she is “not fit for it: has no vocation.” “A missionary wife you must -- shall be,” he says. “You shall be mine: I claim you -- not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign’s service” (448; ch. 34). This statement and his brutal mischaracterization of Jane as one who is “formed for labour not for love” (448; ch. 34) make it clear that his attempts to read her countenance, to penetrate her soul, and influence her

vocation have failed even more than Rochester's own, for as Jane has informed us more than once, it is truth and liberty, not servitude that she pursues. In his final reading from Revelation 21 (463; ch. 35), he speaks the words of his namesake to convince Jane that his vision of the "bride" as "the Lamb's wife" (221: 7-9) must be hers as well: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (21: 2). St. John's vision, however, will not define "a new heaven and a new earth" (21: 2) for Jane and is supplanted soon after by her own visionary experience. Hearing the voice of Edward Fairfax Rochester calling her name across the great distance separating them, she answers, "I am coming!" "Wait for me! Oh, I will come!" (467; ch. 35).

Whether a sympathy between related beings or "the work of nature" (248; ch. 21), their communion shows Jane the way to enlightenment and to her true home. She prays to the "Mighty Spirit," in "a different way to St. John's" (467; ch. 35), and to that Spirit and her own natural world she now returns. Bringing to mind the images of the "gate," the "trees," the "solitary churchyard" in Bewick and the locked door and "chill" "silent" church-like atmosphere of the red-room, her passage through the iron gates of Ferndean to the manor house buried deep in the dense foliage of a "desolate" wood has religious and, at the end of her journey, redemptive connotation. Spirit and nature and the sense of a new heaven and earth are present in this "desolate spot," "as still as a church on a week-day, the pattering rain on the forest leaves [. . .] the only sound audible in its vicinage." From this setting, the maimed and blinded Rochester emerges like

some “wronged and fettered wild beast or bird, dangerous to approach in his sullen woe” (479; ch. 37). A force of nature like Heathcliff, he now embodies and transcends nature. He speaks to Jane of his religious renovation in words that mirror St. John’s sermon from Revelation:

Jane! you think me, I daresay, an irreligious dog: but my heart swells with gratitude to the beneficent God of this earth just now. He sees not as man sees, but far clearer: judges not as man judges, but far more wisely. I did wrong: I would have sullied my innocent flower --breathed guilt on its purity: the Omnipotent snatched it from me. (495; ch. 37)

He tells her that having heard her voice respond to his call from afar, he concluded “that in some wild, lone scene [he] and Jane were meeting in spirit” (496; ch. 37), but in her presence now, “the alpha and the omega of [his] heart’s wishes” (496; ch. 37) has come true and he is fully redeemed: “I thank my Maker, that in the midst of judgment he has remembered mercy. I humbly entreat my Redeemer to give me strength to lead henceforth a purer life than I have done hitherto!” (497; ch. 37)

While our last image of Heathcliff is of his spirit walking on the moors, joined to Cathy in the afterlife, we see the blinded and lame Rochester joined to Jane in this life as one soul. Jane affirms their bond:

No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: ever more absolutely bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. I know no weariness of my Edward’s society: he knows none of mine, any

more than we each do of the pulsation of the heart that beats in
our separate bosoms; consequently, we are ever together. (500; ch. 38)

He is no blind Oedipus, for she is his seer, the one who reads, interprets, and
brings to life the signs of nature and of man:

He saw nature -- he saw books through me; and never did I
weary of gazing for his behalf, and of putting into words the
effect of field, tree, town, river, cloud, sunbeam -- of the
landscape before us; of the weather round us -- and impressing
by sound on his ear what light could no longer stamp on his eye.
(500; ch. 38)

Jane's quest is over, not because she has mastered Rochester, nor simply
because she is now his equal. It is over because in this new relationship to
Rochester, her prophetic power has been realized and her reference to Revelation
in the beginning of her narrative has come full circle. She has read the half-
comprehended signs, sought out their true meanings, and fulfilled her quest in
this final unity between herself and her master.

Chapter 4: Similarity and Difference in *Shirley*

In Brontë's allegorical novels, character, place, and event are contained by the single idea they represent, while in *Shirley*, these formal elements are given the fluidity of similarity and difference, both conventions of the realistic novel and this novel's implicit and explicit themes. Here, Brontë not only exemplifies and describes similarity and difference,⁴⁵ but explores the epistemology of the concepts themselves, their place in the realistic work, and the difference between them and the stasis and duplication of allegorical forms. With that purpose, she creates characters whose relationships, modes of behavior, and psychic conflicts reflect the divisions within the large political and cultural systems of the age. She interrogates recognized conceptual borders which designate and circumscribe differences of class and religion, gender and species, genre and language, and shows how these borders may be blurred and crossed so that different forms of being and conception come together, influence each other, separate, and come together again. Finally, she uses allegory to provide a static contrast to the dynamic realistic narrative, and to state in a variety of forms the idea of sameness – or convention – which certain characters represent.

Making an analogy between allegory and obsession, Angus Fletcher suggests that “if we were to meet an allegorical character in real life, we would say of him that he was obsessed with only one idea, or that he had an absolutely one-track mind, or that his life was patterned according to absolutely rigid habits from which he never allowed himself to vary” (40). As in Brontë's allegorical

novels, we meet characters who seem to fit Fletcher's description, but in this realistic work they are either described as one-dimensional or as complicated real-life characters who are literally flawed by obsessional behavior. Robert Moore, for example, is so possessed by his determination to salvage his business and his family's reputation, and Caroline Helstone, like Polly Home, so overcome by obsessive love, that they would seem less than fully human representations if it were not apparent throughout the novel that both characters are capable of insight and change, and likely therefore to master their obsessions.

Brontë holds up a mirror to the larger conceptual and institutional changes taking place in her century, just as Ian Watt, in his study tracing the rise of the novel, marks the distinction between the medieval perception of a fixed, ahistorical reality, reflected in allegorical works such as *The Faerie Queen* and *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the modern view of spatial presence and temporal flux as the "shaping force of man's individual and collective history" (22). The social effect of such a definitive change is the subject of *Shirley*, whose narrator tells us that Britain, at "the time of which I write"⁴⁶ was in a state of dislocation: "War was then at its height [. . .]: half the people were weary too, and cried out for peace on any terms." For most of them the old ideal of "national honor" had lost all meaning; it "was become a mere empty name of no value in the eyes of many because their sight was dim with famine and for a morsel of meat, they would have sold their birthright" (61; ch. 2).

The division brought on by these conditions informs the novel's focus on difference, whether between Napoleon and Wellington, Whig and Tory, merchant and worker, or between specific characters who, for a variety of reasons, take one side or the other in their century's economic, political, and ideological conflicts.⁴⁷ For example, the transition from agrarianism to industrialism, social hierarchy to egalitarianism, religious belief to secularism, all revolutionary in their effect on the structure of culture and thought, is dealt with in Brontë's novels in three ways: first, by creating an ideal world through the allegorical narrative; second, by depicting the ideal as a value or quality of certain characters who are otherwise realistically portrayed; and third, by treating allegory as satire, which according to Fletcher is one of its formal modes. In *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Villette*, allegory evolves into realism as the spiritually matured protagonists gradually shed their allegorical shells, while in *Shirley*, the allegorical is limited to ornamental characters used for emphasis, contrast, and comparison in a primarily realistic narrative. Allegorical figures become satirical stereotypes in *Shirley*'s portrayal of the group of four curates, the bourgeois Sykes and Sympons, and Mike Hartley, the pseudo Ezekiel or Daniel, in reality without vision or insight, a madman who brings about his murderous prediction by enacting that prediction himself. In this novel, Hartley is one version of the prophet, and, as we learn in the concluding chapter, the narrator and Robert Moore are the others.

The narrator's relationship to the text reflects not only the disunity of the times but the distinction between realistic and allegorical novels. In preceding

chapters the point was made that in the allegorical novels the autobiographical narrator functions as both the editor shaping character and event by revealing or withholding information, and the allegorist giving them figurative meanings, which taken as an organic whole form the novels' allegorical narratives.

Difference and complexity of personality and motive are not the most important factors in these works. Especially in *Villette*, but in the other allegorical novels as well, there is a solipsistic sense that all of the other characters are shadows or projections, whether generated by the narrator's imagination, appearing as a double image of the narrator, the externalization of the narrator's repressed conflict, or the self-created fulfillment of the narrator's desire or idealization. In *Shirley*, the narrator is divided between an objective and subjective stance toward the text, between telling the story from a third person point of view and, as in the other novels, intruding on the text whenever necessary to comment on "the actions and motives of the characters, [to express] personal views about human life in general" (Abrams), or to reveal to the reader that the narrator is writing the text and what kind of text it is. Stating very clearly that this is not an allegorical text, the narrator corrects the reader's likely expectations: "If you expect to be treated to a Perfection, reader [. . .] you are mistaken" (76; ch. 4). "I describe imperfect characters (every character in this book will be found to be more or less imperfect, my pen refusing to draw anything in the model line)" (90; ch. 5). Mr. Helstone voices Brontë's intention "not to confound generals with particulars" (125; ch. 7), and Louis Moore does the same with his assertion that he

“approve[s] nothing Utopian” and his advice to his student Henry Sympson that he “look Life in its iron face: stare Reality out of its brassy countenance” (464; ch. 27).

The narrator tells us that “dreams [of] Elfland,” and, by implication, the symmetry, order, and obsessiveness of Romantic allegory “[lie] behind us,” as the “shores of Reality rise in front”⁴⁸ (121; ch. 7), this statement, along with those of Mr. Helstone and Shirley Keeldar about the impossibility of heroism, speaking volumes about the kind of novel we are reading, the spirit of the times, and the sense of conflict and loss the novel describes. On one occasion, when Helstone and a party of Anglicans march toward approaching dissenters in a show of confrontation, he curbs Shirley’s “longing spirit” by reminding her that their military-like march is in reality a contrived event and a substitute for the real thing:

There is no battle in prospect [. . .]; our country does not want us to fight for it: no foe or tyrant is questioning or threatening our liberty: there is nothing to be done: we are only taking a walk. Keep you hand on the reins, captain, and slack the fire of that spirit: it is not wanted; the more’s the pity. (299; ch. 17)

Helstone’s description of reality makes one-ideal visions, such as Shirley’s heroic ambition to be a “soldier of the Cross,” or to go on a pilgrimage to Palestine, seem “too visionary,” an empty dream, a pretense induced by the longing for “danger, for a faith – a land – [. . .] a lover to defend.” She knows that she needs “a sterner dream” (299; ch. 17), not one contained by a single heroic idea, but one

grounded in the variety of reality and realized in the pleasures and vicissitudes of relationship.

What Derrida means by relationship is here presented as a network of characters and ideas converging, touching, receding, and separating, their identities a complex, inconstant, contrary, and sometimes paradoxical condition of being, but never, as in Derrida, deconstructed or present merely as a trace in the text. Nevertheless, although surface conflicts are resolved, the essential kernel of difference in *Shirley*, as in Derrida, remains unmediated and intact. We see, for example, that the two marriages ending the novel bring the separated lovers together but do not convey the metaphysical meaning which Derrida defines as the “transcendental signified.” Rather, the bond between the members of both couples, and their circumstances, are conditioned by difference, by the discrete needs of each individual, and by the changes in their lives brought on by real events.

To give the narrative more variety and another perspective, a third narrative voice is introduced in a chapter towards the end of the novel, that of Louis Moore, who in the throes of love for Shirley Keeldar marks the difference between her and Caroline Helstone. In Caroline he sees the “nearly faultless” “insular grace and purity” of the ideal Lady of Chivalric Romance, who like *Villette’s* Paulina de Bassompierre is “so delicate, dexterous, quaint, quick, quiet; all done to a minute, all arranged to a strawbreadth” (490; ch. 29). But he wonders, as Paul Emanuel would certainly have done, “where is there anything to

alter, anything to endure, anything to reprimand, to be anxious about? [. . .]

What change could improve her? What pencil dare to paint?" (490; ch, 29) He believes his own "sweetheart" to be realistically flawed, although he takes delight in her "[spirited]," "[fierce]," and entirely original nature as well as in her flaws:

the moment her "minois mutin" meets my eye, expostulatory words
crowd to my lips: from a taciturn man, I believe she would
transform me into a talker. Whence comes the delight I take in
that talk? It puzzles myself sometimes: the more *crâne*, *malin*,
taquin is her mood, consequently the clearer occasion she gives
me for disapprobation; the more I seek her the better I like her.
(489; ch. 29)

That he pairs them in this way is no surprise to the reader, since they are linked throughout the narrative as confidantes and devoted friends. Moreover, one could argue that despite the title of the book, on the one hand, and the 1849 reviewer's claim that "the true heroine is the rector's niece,"⁴⁹ on the other, Shirley and Caroline are, in fact, the novel's dual heroines: both are equally essential to the structure and unity of the plot and to the abstract idea of similarity and difference at its center; and both are protagonists of separate stories, each one unique, each one a counterpart of the other. Connected by intelligence, sensibility, age, gender, and birthplace, they nevertheless have different personalities, imaginations, aspirations, and positions in the world, and in purely symbolic terms, suggest different literary types and historical periods. As Louis Moore suggests, Caroline Helstone's character evokes the chivalric heroine or

saintly figure of medieval literature, who worships at the feet of her ideal knight or God, while Shirley Keeldar's character, complex and difficult to read in the context of contemporary *mores*, is part Wordsworthian-Romantic and part the Lawrentian hero who lives and thinks outside the conventional wisdom of the Victorian age. Spiritual sisters and discrete beings, their characters set the standard for examining the subject of difference as a concrete reality (of gender, class, and economics), as an abstract idea (of personality and perception), as a principle of order (individually and in the community) (Girard 49), and as a means of establishing relationship and identity in what Mircea Eliade paradoxically defines as the "chaos of homogeneity" (23).

Eliade's definition of undifferentiated, or "profane," reality does much to explain Caroline Helstone's psychic condition. Divided between the social necessity of living a repetitious and useless life – the only one allowed a woman of her class – and her desire for the experiences of love and vocation in all their variety, Caroline is in a state of unrest so unabated and debilitating that her identity would be destroyed if she were not rescued, first, by Shirley Keeldar, who shares her innermost world, then, by Mrs. Pryor, who answers her yearning for her long-lost mother, and finally, by Robert Moore, the object of her dream of Romantic love. The differences between Caroline and Shirley do not by definition preclude their similarities for in fact "the minds of the two girls being toned in harmony, often chimed very sweetly together" (231; ch. 12). Both are conscious of the powerful presence of nature, appreciate the value of culture and place, and "[discriminate] between what is real and what is false" (231; ch. 12). Unlike Mr.

Yorke (discussed later), they possess the “organ[s] of Veneration, without which a person would be “wrong on every point,” “of Comparison,” which allows them to sympathize with the other, “of Benevolence and Ideality,” which give “glory and softness to [their] nature[s]” and spread “those divine qualities throughout the universe” (76; ch. 4). Caroline knows Robert Moore’s flawed nature but idealizes him nevertheless – “You were made to be great -- you *shall* be great” (110; ch. 6) -- while Shirley sees in his dedication to his factory, a Titan effort -- Moore (and Helstone), she says, are of “‘earth’s first blood’ -- no bunglers -- no cravens” (335; ch. 19) -- and in his commanding and fighting spirit, a kingly one -- “He looks amidst the set that surround him like Eliab amongst humbler shepherds -- like Saul in a war-council” (309; ch. 17).

Both women venerate the Reverend Cyril Hall because he truly possesses the Christian virtues of love, charity, and forgiveness (21: 358): pardoning human error he recognizes distinction; ignoring stereotype, he transcends allegory. Like Shirley and Caroline, he sympathizes with the factory workers, the owners, and with the plight of Miss Ainley, who has been socially cast-off by the community because she is an old maid. More subtle than any other quality, and the one that most distinguishes Caroline, Shirley, and Mr. Hall from the novel’s allegorical characters, is their capacity for comparison and differentiation, these faculties giving to their characters the transforming power -- the “spark of the soul” -- that Shirley’s school-girl essay locates in “that Seraph on earth named Genius” (459; ch. 28).

On the other hand, to the extent that all the characters efface difference and deny their humanity, they allegorize themselves and others. In response to Louis Moore's admonition that she sometimes seems to him a very real modest girl, and at other times a "pale and lofty marble Juno," Shirley offers this rejoinder: "One man in times of old imparted vitality to the statue he had chiseled [while] others may have the contrary gift of turning life to stone" (462; ch. 27), a statement which if read as a contrast between art imitating nature and art contained by the singularity of form and idea, seems inconsistent with Brontë's interest in allegory. However, as has been pointed out in earlier chapters, her aim in the allegorical novels is the same as her aim in this realistic one: in effect, to transcend allegory by writing allegory and creating a self, like Lucy Snowe, Jane Eyre, and William Crimsworth; by creating characters in a state of loving grace, like Mr. Hall and Miss Ainley; or by doing, in Cowper's words, as "God, working ever on a social plan,/[which] By various ties attaches man to man"("Charity"), as she, herself, does in *Shirley*.

In this realistic novel, Brontë either describes a tendency toward allegory in complexly drawn characters who are temporarily constricted by obsessional behavior and feelings, or limits the allegorical form to representative characters who are wholly constricted by their incapacity to distinguish and accept difference. The latter are exemplified by the Sykes daughters, who seem to say, "I know that I am the standard of what is proper; let everyone therefore whom I approach or who approaches me, keep a sharp look-out for wherein they differ from me -- be the same in dress, manner, opinion, principle or practice -- therein

they are wrong" (132; ch. 7); and by the Sympson family, in all of whose members, but Henry Sympson, is manifested a defining characteristic: in Mr. Sympson, a "spotless respectability," in "his lady," a "narrow system of views," and in his daughters, a "school-room code of laws, from which they "never deviated":

they regarded with secret, whispered horror, all deviations in others. The Abomination of Desolation was no mystery to them: they had discovered that unutterable Thing in the characteristic others call Originality. Quick were they to recognize the signs of this evil; and wherever they saw its trace -- whether in look, word or deed; whether they read it in the fresh, vigorous style of a book, or listened to it in interesting, unhackneyed pure expressive language -- they shuddered -- they recoiled: danger was above their heads -- peril about their steps. What was this strange Thing? Being unintelligible, it must be bad. Let it be denounced and chained up. (428; ch. 26)

The Sympsons find that dangerous "strange Thing" in Shirley, as they would also in Caroline, for both women value originality whether in poetry, ideas, or people. Shirley's argument for refusing Sir Philip Nunnely's marriage proposal centers on his inability to distinguish poetry from rhyme. "Modest," "kind," and "affable," "on ordinary subjects sensible enough," "his single foible" according to Shirley is that he has a "literary turn": he writes "poetry, sonnets, stanzas, ballads.

Perhaps Miss Keeldar [. . .] wished the rhyme had possessed more accuracy – the measure more music – the tropes more freshness – the inspiration more fire [. . .]” (446; ch. 27).

Her argument is beyond Mr. Sympson’s comprehension. Poetry is inconsequential to him, and to his narrow bourgeois way of thinking, it is Sir Philip’s “title, wealth, pedigree” (514; ch. 31) – not poetry – which would “cover” Shirley and him with “distinction” (447; ch. 27). But the connotations of Shirley’s argument are clear to the reader who knows that Sir Philip’s deafness to language, like that of Ginevra, in *Villette*, and Mr. Brocklehurst, in *Jane Eyre*, together with his “fanatic worship of the Muses” (447; ch. 27), add up to a failure of imagination which would dull him to other vital distinctions and deeper truths. Those deeper truths, however, are the essential core of Shirley’s nature. Sensitive to the “vitally metaphoric” (482), she fits Shelley’s definition of the poet who “apprehend[s] the true and the beautiful” (482), and his description of the “greatly good” “man,” who “must imagine intensely and comprehensively,” “[putting] himself in the place of another and many others,” and making “the pains and pleasures of his species [. . .] his own” (487-88). This Sir Philip Nunnely can never achieve, despite the “sensibility in his nature” and a “real, if not discriminating love of the arts,” because what Shirley calls his “monomania” (447-48; ch. 27) precludes the recognition of alterity, and qualifies instead, in terms of this discussion, as a tendency toward allegorizing the self and the other.

“On ordinary subjects,” Philip Nunnely is nevertheless a “sensible” man, a trait which Shirley respects in Helstone and Robert Moore. However she cannot

forgive the breach between the man and the work, nor will she attempt to teach him the difference between poetry and rhyme: “Leading and improving! teaching and tutoring! bearing and forbearing! [. . .] I am not to set him his daily lesson and see that he learns it [. . .]” (575; ch. 36). In different terms, Caroline, too, distinguishes between poet and poem, between the real and the poetic, but unlike Shirley, she idealizes the “stern” and “practical” man, explaining this inconsistency by disclosing her feelings of admiration and “scorn” for Romantic poets such as Cowper and Rousseau, “[sympathizing] intensely” with their “divine” qualities, which “dazzle my eyes and make my soul glow,” while disparaging them for their divided natures: “They are made of clay and gold. The refuse and the ore make a mass of weakness: taken altogether, I feel them unnatural, unhealthy, repulsive” (234; ch. 12). Yet she reads poet and poem with superfine sensitivity, extracting from Cowper’s *The Castaway* the meaning he invests in the “man-forsaken sailor” as the representation of the poet’s own “God-abandoned misery” and, beyond that, as the incarnation of the misery and spiritual isolation of all human kind.

With some contradiction, however, what Caroline cannot fathom in her own life and what Shirley understands very well, is that the chivalric knight of romantic literature has been replaced by the romanticized version of the new industrial man, in this novel represented by the “Titan” figure of Robert Moore. Quite different from the dehumanized Edward Crimsworth, who uses people and worships wealth and status, Robert is wedded to his mill – “his lady love” – to the temporary exclusion of Caroline Helstone and the best interests of his community:

“Backed by his factory and his frames he has all the encouragement he wants, or can know. It is not for love or beauty,” Shirley tells Caroline, “but for ledger and broadcloth he is going to break a spear. Don’t be sentimental; Robert is not so” (333-34;ch. 19).

In the chapter entitled “Coriolanus,” Brontë compares Robert Moore to Shakespeare’s hero, and the historical events and their repercussions in *Shirley* to those in Shakespeare’s tragedy. Of course, the tragic complexity of Shakespeare’s characterization would invalidate any claim that Coriolanus is strictly an allegorical figure. However, it is reasonable to claim that Aufidius’s speculation about whether it is in the “nature” of Coriolanus “not to be other than one thing” (IV, vii, 41-42), and Fletcher’s theory that such a character would seem daemonically possessed, does, according to Fletcher’s theoretical model, add an allegorical dimension to Shakespeare’s tragic hero. Here, as in *Villette* and *Jane Eyre*, Fletcher’s analogy between allegorical and psychological motivation applies and is worth repeating: “It would appear,” as he says, “that [the one-ideal character does] not control his own destiny, but [appears] to be controlled by [. . .] something outside the sphere of his own ego” (41). While the convention of tragic drama requires that we consider Coriolanus ultimately responsible for his own acts, the point is also made in a discussion of the play by Derek Traversi that the “something outside” is a monstrous mother, whose “ideal, to which he will amply correspond, ceases to be human [and] becomes the exaltation of an engine impersonally dedicated to destruction” (246). Divided, like Robert Moore, but

driven by tragic conceptions and more rigid obsessional behavior than Brontë's hero, Coriolanus is, in Traversi's words, "at once a hero [and] an inexorable fighting machine"; "capable of the deepest affection" and "a superb but inhuman engine of war" (248).

Using his tragic flaw to depict her own Romantic hero, Brontë transforms Coriolanus, in the pages of her novel, into a representative type. Both characters possess an "inflexible nature" and both are possessed by private interests, Coriolanus by military success and Robert Moore by the success of his mill. Robert Moore, too, is controlled by external circumstances: the loss of his inheritance, and with it, his rightful place in a family business, first weakened by "disastrous speculations" and then ultimately destroyed in the aftermath of the French Revolution. (60; ch. 2) His obsession is to restore the family business to its "former greatness" (60; ch. 2) to the exclusion of all other concerns: his love for Caroline, his friendship with Shirley, the dire straits of his workers, philanthropic matters in general, political matters separate from his business interests.

This becomes increasingly difficult because in *Shirley* -- as in *Coriolanus* -- the extreme shortage of food creates dissension among the populace. In the novel, this hardship is intensified by Britain's cessation of trade with France and her trading partners, economic losses for British merchants and exporters such as Robert Moore, and widespread unemployment in the textile mills of Yorkshire, including Robert's own. These already desperate conditions are further exacerbated by an increasingly mechanized mode of production, destabilizing in

its effect on the job security of workers, and in its levelling effect on the distinctions between their respective trades and crafts. The tendency towards mechanization and homogenization becomes ever more characteristic of a century influenced at its inception by the dramatic upheaval of the French and Industrial Revolutions and the political, religious, and social changes that these monumental events inspire.

Born on foreign soil and considered a hybrid in his new home, it may be said that in what he has lost, and what he attempts to achieve and finally gains, Robert Moore is the child of history, like Coriolanus, nearly sacrificed to the past, but in this nineteenth century novel ultimately rescued, restored, and assimilated into the new world order. As the mid-century narrator tells us in “The Winding-Up” of the novel, the “green and lone and wild” Hollow where Robert Moore’s history unfolds, has become, in the present, “substantial stone and brick and ashes -- the cinder-block highway, the cottages, and the cottage gardens” replaced by “a mighty mill and a chimney, ambitious as the tower of Babel” (599; ch. 37).

Up until that final point, we see the medieval concept of a precisely structured chain of difference in the process of unravelling, and the issues of similarity and difference re-examined in a more fluid context than in the allegorical works. In *Shirley*, Brontë relegates the allegorical form to her depiction of satirical characters -- some of whom have been mentioned above -- for example, the Rev. Moses Barraclough, representing the dissenting Methodist view which separates itself from mainstream Anglican beliefs, and Mike Hartley, the fanatical Antinomian view which dismisses Christian morality and subscribes

instead to a type of moral anarchy rationalized by grace. Consistent with his religious beliefs, Hartley is referred to also as a “Jacobin and leveller,” these terms reflecting his fanaticism and violence rather than any egalitarian principles associated with the French Revolution. (Andrew and Judith Hook 602).

Counter to these are other stereotypical characters representing the mainstream theology degraded by the “deadly sins” named by Bunyan in his allegory: “[Ignorance],” “Greed,” “Vain-Glory,” “Little Faith,” “Malice,” and “Cruelty,” each one an abstraction embodied by separate characters in Bunyan, while here, a composite of abstractions embodied by more than one character. Spiritual devotion and the “pastoral duty” required by the priestly code do not concern the three curates who introduce the novel in the first chapter, entitled “Levitical.” Brontë describes them ironically as a group “[possessing] all the activity of that interesting age,” but what she means is that they live empty lives of meaningless activity, “rushing backwards and forwards, amongst themselves, to and from their respective lodgings”: “What attracts them; it would be difficult to say. It is not friendship for whenever they meet they quarrel. It is not religion; the thing is never named amongst them: theology they may discuss occasionally, but piety – never” (40-41; ch. 1).

Despite some trivial minor difference between Sweeting, Donne, and Malone, the three “Levites” are essentially the same, and so they are perceived by Mrs. Gale. Comparing the parsons of the present to those from a more distinct time, she observes, “The old parsons is worth the whole lump of [these new] college lads” (41; ch. 1). “On account of his stultified and unmovable self-conceit

and his incurable narrowness of mind,” Caroline has “a peculiar antipathy” (137; ch. 7) toward Donne, while Shirley publicly turns him out of her home, an action which she later regrets, because as she says, “to revenge on poor Donne, his silly spite at Yorkshire, is something like crushing a gnat for attacking the hide of a rhinoceros” (296; ch. 16).

With the reference to Leviticus introducing her novel Brontë makes her point that conventional religion as it is represented by these characters distorts the “priestly approach to God” set down in that Book. In contrast, she presents other more fully drawn characters, such as Mr. Hall and Miss Ainley, who are true to the Old Testament’s prescription of service. She holds them up as models of religious honesty and devotion: Mr. Hall as one of those rare men “who can love their whole race, who can forgive others for being richer, more prosperous, or more powerful than they are” (358; ch. 21); and the saintly Miss Ainley, whose charitable works and “unselfish and benignant mind” make her “a professor of religion” (197; ch. 10), “her life,” Mr. Hall claims, “[coming] nearer the life of Christ than that of any other human being he had ever met with” (198; ch. 10).

Her spiritual purity aside, Miss Ainley is nevertheless an unattractive old maid, and for that reason she and Miss Mann, her spinster counterpart, are made pariahs in their own community, not only by the likes of the Symptons, the Sykes, and the curates, but we can assume, by the Rev. Helstone and Mr. Yorke, who as young men chose the same beautiful woman despite her vacancy of mind and emotion. Because he “[hates] ugliness and [delights] in beauty” (180; ch. 9), Robert Moore makes Miss Mann the object of his derision, and even Caroline, in

the glow of love, “had joined her cousin Robert in laughing at [. . .] [Miss Mann’s] peculiarities” (192-93; ch. 10) and “plainness” (197; ch. 10). Perceiving that she has lost Robert’s love and any realistic hope of their lasting communion, however, Caroline begins to acknowledge her own erroneous perceptions, to find her own voice, and with that discovery, a new compassion and respect for both women. In Miss Ainley she notices “so much goodness, so much usefulness, so much mildness, patience, truth, that she bent her own mind before [hers] in reverence” (198; ch. 10), and for the “solitary and afflicted” Miss Mann, she feels a new admiration for the “fortitude” she has born in the face of “coldness and ridicule” (195; ch. 10), for the unwavering devotion she has shown her family, and for the life-altering sacrifice she has made on their behalf. With very few details, Brontë makes these unique women psychologically coherent, distinct from each other, and therefore entirely different from the characters that she satirizes. In giving Caroline the capacity to realize such distinctions, Brontë not only expands her heroine’s vision --

when she left Miss Mann, it was with the determination to try in future to excuse her faults, never again make light of her peculiarities, or to laugh at her plainness; and above all things not to neglect her, but to come once a-week, and to offer her, from one human heart at least, the homage of affection and respect: she felt she could now sincerely give her a small tribute of each feeling. (196; ch. 10)

-- but makes the reader privy once more to her own vision of “the true” and the “real”:

Whether truth -- be it religious or moral truth -- speak eloquently and in well-chosen language or not, its voice should be heard with reverence. Let those who cannot nicely, and with certainty, discern the difference between the tones of hypocrisy and those of sincerity, never presume to laugh at all, lest they should have the miserable misfortune to laugh in the wrong place, and commit impiety when they think they are achieving wit. (197; ch. 10)

We see how finely tuned Caroline's sensitivity to difference is in her relationship to Mrs. Pryor, Shirley's childhood governess and present friend, Caroline's new-found friend, and, as she eventually learns, her long-lost mother. Mrs. Pryor's eccentrically old-fashioned dress and her timid and awkward nature make her invisible, too, to those in the mainstream, such as Mr. Helstone, who upon meeting her "expresses impatience of her chilly ceremony, and annoyance at her want of aplomb." "What she said, he affected not to hear distinctly, and she was obliged to go over each elaborately constructed nothing twice" (209; ch. 10).

With her harrowing account of Mrs. Pryor's experience as a governess to the upperclass Hardman family, Brontë reveals the oppressive details of her own experience as a governess in just such a family. Adding her voice to the prevailing "condition of women question,"⁵⁰ she makes a searing indictment against a British class system so brutally hierarchical and prejudicial that it dehumanizes single and impoverished women who become governesses for the very reason that they are refined and educated and helpless. Their intellectual superiority is, in effect, submerged and co-opted by a system, which as Miss Hardman describes it,

is based on a theory of eugenics consistent with the century's emerging technology, exemplified by the Panopticon, Jeremy Bentham's model of human control, but also eerily suggestive of "the final solution" and the Orwellian vision of the century to come. As we learn from Andrew and Judith Hook, the following words spoken by the fictional Miss Hardman were, in fact, expressed almost "word for word" by an actual critic in her review of *Jane Eyre* in the *Quarterly* of 1848.⁵¹ What better use could Brontë make of such a naive and dangerous response to her work:

WE need the imprudences, extravagances, mistakes and crimes of a certain number of fathers to sow the seed from which WE reap the harvest of governesses. The daughters of trades-people, however well educated, must necessarily be underbred, and as such unfit to be inmates of OUR dwellings, or guardians of OUR children's minds and persons. We shall ever prefer to place those about OUR offspring, who have been born and bred with somewhat of the same refinement as OURSELVES. (364-65; ch. 21)

Refined they may be, but as Mrs. Pryor discovered during the term of her service, governesses are restricted from socializing with the families they live with. Considered not "equal," "a burden and a restraint in society," they find themselves "friendless," "homeless," and entirely *déclassé* in a hierarchical system whose borders they seem to transgress. Neither aristocrat nor servant, they are resented by both:

The gentlemen, I found, regarded me as a “tabooed woman,” to whom “they were interdicted from granting the usual privileges of the sex,” and yet who “annoyed them by frequently crossing their path.” The ladies too made it plain that they thought me “a bore.” The servants, it was signified, “detested me:” *why*, I could never clearly comprehend. My pupils, I was told, “however much they might love me, and how deep soever the interest I might take in them, could not be my friends.” It was intimated, that I must “live alone, and never transgress the invisible but rigid line which established the difference between me and my employers” (363; ch. 21).

Sharing Mrs. Pryor’s timid nature, both Brontë and Caroline are sympathetic to her predicament. Brontë writes out of her own painful experience in response to William Smith William’s request for advice about his daughter’s future as a governess:

She should begin by degrees to endeavour to overcome her diffidence. Were she destined to enjoy an independent, easy existence she might respect her natural disposition to seek retirement and even cherish it as a shade-loving virtue -- but since that is not her lot; since she is fated to make her way in the crowd -- and to depend on herself, she should say -- I will try and learn the art of self possession [. . .]. While however -- I pen this piece of advice -- I confess that it is much easier to give than to follow. What the sensations of the nervous are

under the gaze of publicity none but the nervous know -- and
 how powerless Reason and Resolution are to control them
 would sound incredible except to the actual sufferers. (12 May 1848)

She asks Ellen Nussey to “imagine the miseries of a reserved wretch like me.”
 When “[harshly]” “taken to task” for being exhausted and depressed, she
 responded, like Mrs. Pryor: “like a fool I cried most bitterly -- I could not help it --
 my spirits quite failed me at first. I thought I had done my best -- strained every
 nerve to please her -- and to be treated in that way merely because I was shy --
 and sometimes melancholy was too bad” (June 1839).

Unlike Brontë and Caroline, however, Mrs Pryor defends her employers,
 bows to the difference between them and to their superior position as she and
 they perceive it. To Caroline’s outrage against Miss Hardman -- “her religion must
 have been that of the Pharisee, who thanked God that he was not as other men
 are, nor even as that publican”(365; ch. 21) -- Mrs Pryor responds with almost
 unbearable diffidence: “Miss Hardman, my love, was a very strong-minded young
 lady, of most distinguished talents: the aristocracy are decidedly a very superior
 class, you know -- both physically and morally and mentally -- as a high Tory I
 acknowledge that [. . .]” (364; ch. 21). Though in other ways intelligent and
 discerning, her extreme self-effacement and vaguely formed political views, if
 anything, condemn her to a subservient and stupefied position:

I should be the last person to wish to instil into your mind any
 feeling of dissatisfaction with your lot in life, or an sentiment
 of envy or insubordination towards your superiors. Implicit

submission to authorities, scrupulous deference to our betters (under which term I, of course, include the higher classes of society) are, in my opinion indispensable to the wellbeing of every community. (365; ch. 21)

We see another example of her submissive nature in her marriage to a violent sadist, who so terrified her that after his death she could not distinguish between her daughter's appearance and her essential innocence; she could not claim Caroline as her daughter for fear that in sharing her father's good looks, she might also have inherited his willful and abusive nature. Longing to embrace her daughter from infancy on, she disappeared instead from her life, and in all likelihood would have remained "friendless," and "homeless," and childless if it were not for Shirley's continued affection and respect for her childhood governess and present friend.

Well aware of her mother's deficiencies, Caroline distinguishes them from the fine points in her nature. She appreciates her as a woman of kindness and compassion, true in her judgment of character, intelligent and sensitive to subtle distinctions. Like Caroline, Shirley, and Brontë herself, Mrs. Pryor is most fully alive in the "still demesne of Nature" (360 ch. 21). In that setting and with Caroline at her side, she fears nothing -- "her heart [. . .] shook off a burden, her brow put aside a veil, her spirits too escaped from a restraint." To Caroline she imparts her knowledge and power of comparison, "revealing in quiet, unconscious touches of description, a sense of the picturesque, an appreciation of the beautiful or commonplace, a power of comparing the wild with the cultured, the grand

with the tame, that gave to her discourse a graphic charm as pleasant as it was unpretending" (361; ch. 21).

Their mutual diffidence, more extreme in Mrs. Pryor than in Caroline, is not shared or always accepted by Shirley Keeldar, since her own bold nature is quite different. Even in the dire aftermath of a fierce confrontation between the millowners and workers, and in Shirley's absence from Fieldhead, Mrs. Pryor is unable to answer the request for food and supplies for the wounded. Wanting to do the right thing, but rendered literally helpless by the call to action, she is devastated by Shirley's harsh response to her hesitation. "I am deficient in self-confidence and decision," Mrs. Pryor says. "I always have been deficient in those qualities: yet I think Miss Keeldar should have known my character well enough by this time, to be aware that I always feel an even painful solicitude to do right, to act for the best" (353; ch. 21). As Shirley well knows, Caroline, too, is more passive than active, more female than male in her spirit and incapacity to carve out an active and satisfactorily independent life. To Robert Moore, who appreciates these qualities in Caroline, Shirley says, "You think me a dangerous specimen of my sex" (352; ch. 20). She contrasts herself to Caroline, noting that Caroline is "neither eccentric nor difficult of control," "neither masculine nor of what they call the spirited order of women." "I have seen her flash out," Robert says, and Shirley answers, "So have I -- but not with manly fire: it was a short, vivid, trembling glow, that shot up, shone, vanished --" (352; ch. 20).

Caroline does recognize, however, the necessity of having an autonomous existence. If it were possible she would work at Robert's side as an apprentice,

but since it is not, she would be willing to support herself as a governess, the only job available to an educated single woman: "I should like an occupation," she says to Robert; "and if I were a boy it would not be so difficult to find one" (99; ch. 5). For her, as for other Victorian women, marriage is the only means of achieving happiness. When that possibility fails, she is delivered over to the "single tyrant master-torture" (235; ch. 12) that single women know, to boredom and loneliness and the hopeless recognition that she is unable to shape her life in any meaningful way. Robert has no such problem, for as Caroline is most painfully aware, men and women are "in such a different position":

Women have so few things to think about -- men so many: [. . .]

Much of what cheers your life may be dependent on him, while not a feeling or interest of moment in his eyes may have reference to you. Robert used to be in the habit of going to London sometimes for a week or a fortnight together; well, while he was away, I found his absence a void: there was something wanting; Briarfield was duller. Of course I had my usual occupations; still I missed him. I used to feel [. . .] that if a magician or a genius had, at that moment, offered me Prince Ali's tube [. . .] and if, with its aid, I had been enabled to take a view of Robert -- to see where he was, how occupied -- I should have learned in a startling manner, the width of the chasm which gaped between such as he and such as I. I knew that, however my thoughts might adhere to him, his were effectually sundered from me.

(234-35; ch. 12)

Shirley reminds Caroline of the typically held belief that “hard labor and learned professions [. . .] make women masculine, coarse, unwomanly” (235; ch. 12), a view about gender identity that neither one holds, but because Shirley is more daring, or perhaps because she is more privileged than Caroline, one that she interrogates and tests, just as Brontë did in her own life and in her novels. Being politically moderate but imaginatively radical, however, neither attempts to literally overthrow conventional boundaries. Rather, they approach the issue of gender difference as a rhetorical construct within which they describe, question, play with, and sometimes confront distinctions as they are stereotypically perceived.

Having placed Brontë in a Carlylean context, Barry Qualls remarks the “radical assertion” made by Brontë’s novels that “woman has a *bildung* of her own.” In each, she “explores the dangers of an oversimplified assertion of the spiritual, self-defining nature of work when that work does not mean the same thing for women as it does for men” (44). Brontë gives Shirley that same “radical” voice, yet we know enough about the author’s religious and political affiliations to recognize them in the narrator’s conservative position on the clergy, and in Shirley’s confrontation with Mr. Yorke (discussed below). We know also that in these areas as well, neither Brontë nor Shirley wish to dramatically overturn the status quo. Brontë may be influenced by Romantic ideas, and like her father before her,⁵² sympathetic to the plight of the poor, but she is in every sense a British patriot, loyal to the Church of England, to Wellington and his cause against Napoleon, and to the Tory position against Jacobin principles. In

one chapter she satirizes the curates, and in another cautions the reader against thinking that she is denouncing the clergy as a whole: “if you are a parson hater, you need not expect me to go along with you every step of your dismal, downward-tending unchristian road; you need not expect me to join in your deep anathemas, at once so narrow and so sweeping -- in your poisonous rancour so intense and so absurd against ‘the cloth’”[. . .] (67; ch. 3).

With similar words Shirley confronts Mr. Yorke, who like his namesake in *The Professor*, is conflicted between his class and his radical politics:

All that cant [. . .] about soldiers and parsons is most offensive in my ears. All ridiculous, irrational crying up of one class, whether the same be aristocrat or democrat -- all howling down of another class, whether clerical or military -- all exacting injustice to individuals, whether monarch or mendicant -- is really sickening to me: all arraying of ranks against ranks, all party hatreds all tyrannies disguised as liberties, I reject and wash my hands of.
(356; ch. 21)

Stating her own duality, she suggests Brontë’s as well. Her words to Mr. York reflect characters in Brontë’s novels who represent one side or both sides of the duality she describes, as for instance, the religious hypocrisy of Mr. Brocklehurst and the rigid integrity of St. John Rivers; the rigidly formulaic theology of Père Silas; and the conflicting principles of Hunsden Yorke Hunsden, and, here, Mr. Yorke:

When I hear Messrs Malone and Donne chatter about the Authority

of the Church, the dignity and claims of the priesthood, the deference due to them as clergymen; when I hear the outbreaks of their small spite against Dissenters; when I witness their silly narrow jealousies and assumptions; when their palaver about forms, and traditions, and superstitions, is sounding in my ear, when I behold their insolent carriage to the poor, their often base servility to the rich, I think the Establishment is indeed in a poor way and both she and her sons appear in the utmost need of reformation. Turning away distressed from minster-tower and village-spire-ay [. . .] I remember your strictures on all who differ from you, your sweeping condemnation of classes and individuals without the slightest allowance made for circumstances or temptations; and then, Mr. York, doubt clutches my inmost heart as to whether men exist clement, reasonable, and just enough to be entrusted with the task of reform. I don't believe *you* are of the number. (357-58; ch. 21)

Not for the sake of reform but for creative as well as practical reasons both Brontë and Shirley take on male personae, Brontë with the cognomen, Currer Bell, and Shirley with the title, Esquire, affixed to her name. Of course Brontë does have a political reason for using that professional pseudonym; as she herself stated, she wants her work to be judged purely on its merits and not “looked on with prejudice” because of her gender. (Gaskell 286) Irene Taylor gives other reasons as well, reminding us that “Charlotte had chosen male personae for her writing long before she could have been animated by that motive [. . .].” “The

role of gender in their imaginative life had in fact been critical to both Charlotte and Emily at least since the time of the toy soldiers; and from the first it had been closely tied to their conception of themselves as writers" (6). Taylor's words suggest that in her creative life and in her characterization of Shirley Keeldar as a poet, Brontë explores the enigmas of gender difference through role play, not as political theater, but because she feels that "the mysteries of creative power are somehow entwined with the mysteries of gender"(6). In their effort to explicate those mysteries, the author and her character present and test them in the world, and in that experimental gesture conceptually dissolve their seeming boundaries.

On one occasion she alludes to herself as a male suitor, declaring that "if she had the bliss to be really Shirley Keeldar, Esq., Lord of the Manor of Briarfield, there was not a single fair one in this and the two neighbouring parishes [excluding Caroline] whom she should have felt disposed to request to become Mrs. Keeldar, lady of the manner" (217; ch. 12). She takes on the male role especially in the company of Robert Moore, the most ambitious of men, and Mr. Helstone, the most militant of men. Explaining her frequent contact with Moore she says,

I have been obliged to see him: there was business to transact.

Business! Really the word makes me conscious I am no longer a girl, but quite a woman and something more. I am an esquire:

Shirley Keeldar, Esquire, ought to be my style and title. They gave me a man's name; I hold a man's position: it is enough to inspire me with a touch of manhood; and when I see such people as that stately

Anglo-Belgian -- that Gérard [Robert's maternal name] Moore before me, gravely talking to me of business, really I feel quite gentlemanlike. (213; ch. 11)

At her suggestion and in the spirit of play, Mr Helstone refers to Shirley as "this future magistrate, this churchwarden [. . .], this captain of yeomanry, this young squire of Briarfield" (215; ch. 11). On two occasions, however, she does more than play a part. Under Mr. Helstone's command, she leads an army of scholars, teachers, and curates into a confrontation with an oncoming army of religious dissenters. Contrived and unnecessary as that confrontation may be, it is nevertheless potentially violent. Like two generals overseeing their troops, she and Mr. Helstone keep the curates from retreating, making it clear to them by their intimidating gaze that the curates are "between two fires [. . .] both of whom [watch] any deviation with lynx-eyed vigilance, and [are] ready, the one with his cane, the other with her parasol, to rebuke the slightest breach of orders, the least independent or irregular demonstration [. . .]" (301; ch. 17). On another more serious and dangerous occasion, Mr. Helstone calls on her to bear more lethal arms in order to protect Caroline from harm during the battle between the millowners and the laborers. "I am paying you a great compliment, captain, to lend you these [pistols]," he says: "were you one of the awkward squad you should not have them" (326; ch. 19). While Shirley encourages Caroline to watch the battle with her from afar, she prevents her from rushing to Robert's side. Perhaps because she participates in the male world, both actually and psychically, she knows better than Caroline that Robert's manhood requires

him to be in full charge of that engagement. She describes Robert's reality under such circumstances. The result would be, she says,

To teaze and annoy him; to make a spectacle of yourself and him
before those soldiers, Mr. Malone, your uncle, et cetera. Would
he like it, think you? Would you like to remember it a week hence?
(338; ch. 19)

And in response to Caroline's tears she "sternly" asks,

Why do you cry, Lina? [. . .] You ought to be glad instead of sorry.
Robert has escaped any serious harm; he is victorious; he has been
cool and brave in combat; he is now considerate in triumph: is this
a time -- are these causes for weeping? (339; ch. 19)

In their effort to assume and internalize difference, Brontë and Shirley take their powers of comparison further by making parallels between human beings and species lower on the hierarchical chain. One could argue that in making such parallels, both author and character move once more toward allegory, Brontë using animal imagery in the strict allegorical sense to give "wrath [wakening] to the cry of Hate the form of the Lion [who] shakes his mane and [rises] to the howl of the Hyena" (335; ch. 19), and in other instances, to satirize the curates, who because they are satirically drawn, may also be considered allegorical figures. She refers to the curates as "locusts," to Mr. Sweeting as "the lady's pet" (42; ch. 1), to Mr. Malone as a "gnat" (43; ch. 1), and to Moses Barraclough, the revivalist preacher, as a "possessed bull" (46; ch. 1). However, neither Brontë nor Shirley confine this mode of comparison to allegorical figures alone. To Mr.

Helstone, Brontë gives a “hawk’s head, beak and eye”: she compares him to a “falcon” (45; ch. 1); of Miss Ainley, she observes that “neither lamb nor dove need fear her but would welcome rather in her look of simplicity and softness a sympathy with their own natures” (292; ch. 16); and of Caroline and Shirley dressed in their finery, she says they “looked very much like a snow-white dove and gem-tinted bird of paradise joined in social fight” (293; ch. 16). Shirley wonders that Nature did not give Robert Moore “a bulldog’s head,” claiming that he has “a bulldog’s tenacity”:

And something also you have of the same animal’s silent ways
of going about its work: you give no warning; you come
noiselessly behind, seize fast, and hold on. [. . .] Your very
silence indicates your race. How little you talk in general, yet
how deeply you scheme! You are far-seeing; you are calculating”
(240; ch. 13).

She humanizes this imagery further by making the capacity to identify with all sentient creatures the measure of a person’s spiritual being. Because he lacks that human dimension, Mr. Donne brutalizes animals, as does Sam Wynne, Shirley’s “vulgar” suitor. Sheer terror causes Mr. Donne to strike Shirley’s “fierce-looking” dog and rapidly flee the scene, followed by Mr. Malone and the hurt and enraged dog in close pursuit; and although Shirley tells Mr. Donne that she is fond of Tartar, he insults both mistress and animal by suggesting that she hang her dog and replace him with a dog that ladies like. (279; ch. 15) We learn of a second occasion when Shirley told two carriers who had encouraged their dogs to

brutally attack Tartar “that she held them far less of men than the three brutes whirling and worrying in the dust before them”; (348; ch. 20) and of a third, when Shirley, who has seen Sam Wynne’s dog running up the lane, “her head down, her tongue hanging out, bruised and beaten all over,” informs Louis Moore that “Mr. Sam often flogs his pointers cruelly” (477; ch. 28).

The man “moulded in [his] Maker’s image,” according to Shirley, respects those classes and kinds that the striving, preoccupied world considers too low on the hierarchical chain to heed or care for. The capacity to recognize and dignify “the little Irish beggar that comes barefoot to [Shirley’s] door; the mouse that steals out of the cranny in the wainscot; the bird that in frost and snow pecks at [her] window for a crumb; the dog that licks [her] hand and sits beside [her] knee” (224; ch. 12), Shirley attributes to Louis, and Caroline to Robert Moore. Robert is kind and affectionate to animals, and polite and often sensitive to females: to his kind but ridiculous sister, the abrasive Mrs. Yorke, and the intelligent and original Yorke daughters. But his sensitivity pales beside that of Louis Moore, who seems to cross the threshold between species and between genders, speaking to Tartar as if he were human, passively receiving the birds who fearlessly fly down to him waiting to be fed, and treating Shirley as a distinct, idiosyncratic, and living being, whose gifts and rebellious spirit he admires, whose imperfections and need he respects. He answers Shirley’s observation that he takes “a sort of harsh, solitary triumph in drawing pleasure out of the elements and the inanimate and lower animate creation” with an affirmation of his human inheritance --

With animals I feel I am Adam's son; the heir of him to whom
 dominion was given over "every living thing that moveth upon
 the earth." Your dog likes and follows me; when I go into that
 yard, the pigeons from your dove-cot flutter at my feet; your mare
 in the stable knows me as well as it knows you, and obeys me better.
 (433; ch. 26) --

and says of Shirley that her faults never "compromise her refinement"; that
 "indeed," it is "through these very loophole[s] of character [that], the reality,
 depth, and genuineness of that refinement may be ascertained" (489; ch. 29).

The images Jane Eyre sees in Bewick are repeated in Caroline's vision of a
 remote Nordic landscape never visited by fisherman or hunter, of "seals lying in
 the sunshine on solitary shores [. . .]; of rock crevices full of pearl eggs bedded in
 seaweed; of unscared birds covering white sands in happy flocks [. . .]; of whales
 rushing through the livid and liquid thunder down from the frozen zone"
 (248-49; ch. 13). But what is represented as religious symbolism in *Jane Eyre* is
 represented as myth in *Shirley*. Taking those images beyond the language of lyric
 into the language of myth, Shirley crosses the divide between male and female,
 human and beast. She envisions a mermaid, rising, sinking, rising again, and
 finally "emerging from the dim wave" to summon with "articulate voice" all
 within hearing range of her seductive call. Men would respond to her
 "preternatural lure," says Shirley, but she and Caroline would be "unmoved" by
 the power of that "monstrous likeness of [themselves]" (249; ch. 13). To

Caroline's claim that women are "neither temptresses, nor terrors, nor monsters," Shirley answers, "there are men who ascribe to 'woman' in general, such attributes" (250; ch. 13), or to the self-sufficient and competent woman, the attributes of a man.

The truth of her words is implied in Robert Moore's reference to Caroline, on the one hand, as the feminine "Sphynx" (17; ch. 6) – the monstrous figure in Greek mythology with the "lower body of a winged lion and the breast and head of a woman" (Feder) – and, on the other hand, as a "Clever" and masculine "little Oedipus" who "would have baffled the sphynx." In the first instance Robert seductively teases her in response to the very serious questions she poses about Coriolanus and the parallels in his own character, and in the second instance, compliments her for her acumen in decoding the family resemblance between Louis and Robert Moore. In literature and life, Brontë and Shirley seem to be saying that animals are objectified and women are allegorized by men, neither distinguished as separate beings, but defined, constrained, controlled, and often brutalized by the shared idea that men have of them. With regard to women, she supposes,

If men could see us as we really are they would be a little amazed;
But the cleverest, the acutest men are often under an illusion about
women: they do not read them in a true light: they misapprehend
them, both for good and evil: their good woman is a queer thing,
half-doll, half angel; their bad woman is almost always a fiend. Then
to hear them fall into ecstasies with other's creations, worshipping the

heroine of such a poem -- novel -- drama, thinking it fine -- divine!

Fine and divine it may be, but often quite artificial -- false as the rose
of my best bonnet. (34; ch. 19)

Shirley points to the Eve of *Paradise Lost* as one such distorted idea of womankind. Trusted by Adam to exercise free will, Milton's Eve commits a crime against God, Adam and humankind, then berates Adam for permitting her to do so -- "Being as I am, why didst not thou the Head/command me absolutely not to go?" (IX; 1155). Although guilty of misjudging Eve's capacities -- of "overmuch admiring/What seem'd in thee so perfect, that I thought/No evil durst attempt thee" (IX; 1178) -- Adam's sin is minor in comparison to hers according to Milton, while Milton's following condemnation of Eve is narrow and condescending according to Shirley:

Thus it shall befall

Him to worth in Woman overtrusting

Lets her will rule; restraint she will not brook,

And left t' her self, if evil thence ensue,

She first his weak indulgence will accuse. (IX; 1182-85)

In Eve, she argues, Milton sees a domesticated, subservient woman -- "It was his cook that he saw; or it was Mrs. Gill, as I have seen her, making custards in the heat of summer" -- not the first woman to be "heaven born" (315; ch. 18). Shirley rewrites Milton's portrayal of Eve, using imagery similar to that in Jane Eyre's paintings to create, instead, an immense and luminous figure, a mystical "Mother Eve," "a woman Titan" (325; ch. 18) whom she places at the center of creation:

her robe of blue air [spreading] to the outskirts of the heath,
 where yonder flock is grazing; a veil white as an avalanche
 [sweeping] from her head to her feet, and arabesques of lightening
 [flaming] on its borders. Under her breast I see her zone, purple
 like that horizon: through its blush shines the star of evening. Her
 steady eyes I cannot picture; they are clear – they are deep as lakes.
 [. . .] Her forehead has the expanse of a cloud, and is paler than the
 early moon, risen long before dark gathers: she reclines her bosom on
 the ridge of Stilbro' Moor; her mighty hands are joined beneath it.
 So kneeling, face to face she speaks with God. That Eve is Jehova's
 daughter, as Adam was his son. (18; 315-16)

This allusion to Milton and the earlier one to Shakespeare are given material presence in the “domestic sanctum” of Mr. Yorke’s sitting room, its brilliantly stained glass windows containing the “suave head” of the Renaissance poet at the center of one and the “serene” head of the Puritan poet at the center of the other. Placed in that axial position in the form of medallions, the light glittering around them (165; ch. 9), these isolated images are, in effect, iconographic representations of two different and opposing world views. As the work of the first author was humanist and realistic, and of the second, religious and allegorical, the images stand for a similar division in the novel, in Mr. Yorke, and within the Yorke family as well. Shirley’s confrontation of Mr. Yorke comes to mind in Caroline’s claim for degree in *Coriolanus*: “Here’s Shakspeare [. . .] and there’s Coriolanus,” she says to Robert. “Now read and discover by the

feelings the reading will give you at once how low and how high you are” (115; ch. 6). She speaks of the drama’s “large picture of human nature,” “the reality stamped upon [its] characters” (116; ch. 6), and its “scenes made of condensed truth and strength” (117; ch. 6). Unlike Shirley, wanting to teach her beloved, she refers to Shakespeare as the “science” that she and Robert “are going to study”: “It is to stir you, to give you new sensations. It is to make you feel your life strongly, not only your virtues, but your vicious, perverse points” (115; ch. 6). Conversely, to Milton, Shirley attributes a religious and intellectual perspective, an allegorical form, and a limited comprehension of the human spirit:

Milton was great; but was he good? His brain was right; how was his heart? He saw heaven: he looked down on hell. He saw Satan, and Sin his daughter, and Death their horrible offspring. Angels serried before him their battalions: the long lines of adamantine shields flashed back on his blind eyeballs the unutterable splendour of heaven. Devils gathered their legions in his sight: their dim, discrowned, and tarnished armies passed rank and file before him. Milton tried to see the first woman; but, Cary, he saw her not.

(314; ch. 18)

The difference between Shakespeare and Milton not only informs the novel’s focus on difference and similarity, but also suggests the many specific inconsistencies residing at the core of Mr. Yorke’s character. We are told, for example, that lacking a poet’s imagination, he has contempt for poetry; possessing taste, he has “a fine ear for music [and] a correct eye for colour and form”

(77; ch. 4), on the surface, a narrow aesthetic distinction, but with it Brontë expresses the larger and more vital truth of her conviction that “there is nothing really valuable in this world, there is nothing glorious in the world to come, that is not poetry” (514; ch. 31). In keeping with Shelley’s definition of the poet, Brontë, too, includes a broader spectrum of creators in her definition than the “authors of language,” “dance,” “music,” “statuary,” and “painting” (482). The poet is more, according to Shelley, who describes that unacknowledged creator as a “prophet” and “legislator of the World” (508). Whether, as Shirley proclaims in her list of heroes, a philosopher such as Socrates, a statesman such as Themistocles or George Washington, a king such as Leonidas, or a soldier such as Epaminondas (515; ch. 31), the poet possesses the imagination intrinsic to true understanding and belief. These are lacking in Mr. Yorke, yet we are told that he is not an “irreligious” man. He attends church and believes in God in Heaven, but lacks the compassion, awe, and moral imagination of the poet, who can “draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which,” as Shelley defines the term, “is called religion” (482).

Mr. Yorke’s disparaging generalizations about the clergy, the military, and the millowners are anaethma to Shirley, as Hunsden Yorke Hunsden’s are to Frances Henri, and as they must have been to Brontë as well. In her characterization of Mr. Yorke, she asserts with some vehemence that his ideological stance does not allow for the nuance of particularity, although he and his family are themselves exceptions to the conventional standard. Not fitting any

easy stereotype of the scion of an aristocratic Yorkshire family, Mr. Yorke's language and his manner vary depending on the circumstance: "now he spoke broad Yorkshire, and anon he expressed himself in very pure English"; "he could be polite and affable, and he could be blunt and tough. His station, then, you could not easily determine by his speech or demeanour [. . .]" (72; ch. 3). As with Hunsden Yorke Hunsden, an inconsistency also exists between his radical politics and his "ancient" lineage, his Jacobin sympathies and his harsh treatment of rebellious workers:

Yorke -- who like many who abhor being controlled, knew how to control with vigour -- had the secret of crushing rebellion in the germ, of eradicating it like a bad weed, so that it never spread or developed within the sphere of his authority. Such being the happy state of his own affairs, he felt himself at liberty to speak with the utmost severity of those who were differently situated; to ascribe whatever was unpleasant in their position entirely to their own fault, to sever himself from the masters, and advocate freely the cause of the operatives. (79; ch. 4)

Shirley describes him as he really is: "A prouder -- a higher minded man than yourself does not exist. You find it easy to speak comfortably to your inferiors -- you are too haughty, too ambitious, too jealous to be civil to those above you" (358; ch. 21). She draws out his true nature in response to his claim that Robert Moore would be a suitable husband to her: "My lass, Moore is a gentleman: his blood is pure and ancient as mine or thine." Reminiscent of Frances Henri's

response to Hunsden, Shirley answers facetiously as well: "And we two set store by ancient blood? We have family pride, though one of us at least is a Republican?" (359; ch. 21)

Mr. Yorke's generalizations would be *anaethma* as well to Mr. Helstone, who admonishes Caroline for confusing the general with the particular after she associates his marriage with his negative attitude toward the institution itself. Although his response to Caroline's questions clearly disguises the particular reality of his unhappy marriage and his callousness toward his wife and all women, the distinction he draws between the general and the particular does in fact apply to his own divided identity, and is further emphasized by the narrator's insistence that the reader not generalize about the nature of the clergy. The narrator explains that this militant man of God "had missed his vocation: he should have been a soldier, and circumstances had made him a priest" (68; ch. 3). Described as a formalist, "a man true to principle, -- honourable, sagacious and sincere" (68; ch. 3) -- he is nevertheless divided by his passion for battle, on the one hand, and his duty to the church and his parishoners, on the other, a most likely breach in the nineteenth century when men like Mr. Helstone and William Crimsworth were expected to enter the church whether fit for that vocation or not.

The difference between Yorke and Helstone is also indicative of the divisions in the country at large. Being a high Tory, a staunch supporter of the Anglican Church, and of the Establishment in all its forms, Helstone ascribes to "the divine right of kings," "the duty of non-resistance," and "the sanity of war"

(70; ch. 3). He believes the masters in the right and the workers “unreasonable”; he condemns their insurrection against authority; and as a remedy, he “[prescribes] [. . .] vigorous government interference, strict magisterial vigilance, [and] when necessary prompt military coercion” (83; ch. 4). Despite their political and philosophical opposition, however, Yorke and Helstone are equally powerful and equally flawed adversaries: both have stature and influence in their community; both are intelligent and headstrong; both are “proud and prejudiced” men. (358; ch. 21)

Similarity and distinction of a different kind are evident in Brontë’s characterization of Louis and Robert Moore. When Louis first appears before Caroline, she cannot distinguish between two brothers who bear, superficially, if not intrinsically, more than the usual family resemblance. Facing the figure she thinks is Robert, she is momentarily caught at the threshold between dream and reality, as Robert’s identity seems to double, then cancel itself out, his “visage like and unlike, -- Robert, and no Robert,” and finally, as reality establishes itself, the “visage” of “a new Robert -- the real Robert as she felt at once” (396; ch. 23). Indeed, as noted previously, Louis is a spiritualized version of the “stern,” “practical,” and ambitious brother who is wedded to trade, reputation, and commercial success. For the sake of secrecy and perhaps consistency, Shirley leaves Louis off her list of poets, or “heroes” as she calls them, although, unlike his brother, who follows his own necessity and his own law, Louis is the living embodiment of Shelley’s definition of the poet as “teacher, “institutor of laws” and “inventor of the arts of life” (482). Having served as Shirley’s tutor, he is that

Pygmalian sculptor who in shaping her intellect and poetic nature, has given her life. In "The Winding-Up," we are informed that he will eventually serve as "magistrate of the district," and in that role, will be "universally esteemed, considered, consulted, depended on" (597; ch. 37). "Good for the infant and the aged, nourishing for the poor, wholesome for the rich" (597; ch. 37), he uses the "organ of Comparison" that Brontë and Shelley identify with the moral imagination to good purpose. He is the "true poet" (78; ch. 4), the "greatly good" "man" who can "put himself in the place of another and many others" (487-88). Yet, knowing the real woman in the case of Shirley, he can identify with her and still idealize and venerate her in the pages of his poet's journal, comparing her to a "Peri," a superhuman being, but one who is at once "too mutinous for heaven -- too innocent for hell" (490-91; ch. 29).

According to Elizabeth Gaskell, Emily Brontë was the inspiration for Charlotte Brontë's characterization of Shirley Keeldar, an autobiographical connection borne out by the echo of Catherine Earnshaw in Louis Moore's words describing Shirley. Having dreamed of heaven, the equally "innocent" and "mutinous" heroine of *Wuthering Heights* tells Nelly Dean that she "should be miserable in heaven" because "heaven did not seem to be [her] home" (62; ch. IX). An echo of Catherine Earnshaw and *Wuthering Heights* is present also in Brontë's characterization of the second generation of Yorkes, in part because they resemble Catherine or Heathcliff in one way or another, but also because the second generation in each novel has a substantive structural relation

to the preceding generation and to each other. Heathcliff recognizes himself in the rough but sensitive and proud young Hareton Earnshaw, Linton Heathcliff seems a distorted version of the spoiled young Edgar Linton, while Catherine Linton combines the qualities of both her parents. Hareton inspires Catherine's passion; she gives him the tools of civilization by teaching him to read; and together they assimilate the unmediated reality represented by their real and/or spiritual parents.

As for the Yorke children, they seem more the progeny of Shirley Keeldar and Caroline Helstone than of their own parents, "neither [of whom] has a spirit to compare with" theirs (167; ch. 9). Mrs. Yorke, in particular, tends to allegorize them in the sense that we have defined that term. Rigid to the point of obsession, she attempts to force them into her own idea of what they should be and what they should become. She insists that Jessy "repress" her "forwardness" (387; ch. 23); that satisfaction is only to be found in doing one's duty, which for her "careless" and "stubborn" daughters means "womanly and domestic employment" (386; ch. 23). They rebel against their mother's one-ideal projections, as does Caroline when Mrs. Yorke attempts to allegorize her by claiming that she is more "novel heroine" than a woman of "common sense" (387; ch. 23). In confronting that narrow-minded assessment, Caroline asserts her own humanity and autonomy for the first time: "It is my right to speak as I think proper: nothing binds me to converse [or do] as you dictate" (390; ch. 23). And to her mother's narrow definition of duty, Rose responds by referring to those artifacts of domestic life, which like the implied fixedness and constriction of the

hyphenated words she uses to describe them, threaten to restrict her freedom, her talent, and her imaginative possibilities:

Right mother! And if my Master has given me ten talents,
 my duty is to trade with them, and make them ten talents more.
 Not in the dust of household drawers shall the coin be interred.
 I will *not* deposit it in a broken-spouted tea-pot, and shut it up in
 a china-closet among tea-things. I will *not* commit it to your
 work-table to be smothered in piles of woolen hose. I will *not* prison
 it in the linen-press to find shrouds among the sheets: and least of all
 mother [. . .] will I hide it in a tureen of cold potatoes, to be ranged
 with bread, butter, pastry and ham on the shelves of the larder.

She goes on to say:

Mother, the Lord who gave each of us our talents will come home
 some day, and will demand from all an account. The tea-pot, the
 old stocking-foot, the linen rag, the willow-pattern tureen will yield
 up their barren deposit in many a house: suffer your daughters, at
 least to put their money to the exchangers, that they may be enable
 at the Master's coming to pay him his own with usury. (385-86; ch. 23)

Caroline Helstone recognizes and knows “how to treat” the originality of
 the Yorke children, especially Rose Yorke, who she says is “a peculiar child -- one
 of the unique” (384; ch. 23), and Jessy Yorke who has “something of the genius of
 humor in her nature” (391; ch. 23). The narrator acts as “seer,” telling the reader

that “life will never have much joy in it for Mark,” who like Heathcliff has a childish “temper” but “no youth.” At twenty five, she predicts, “he will be already middle-aged in mind” (169; ch. 9). More Heathcliff than Catherine, Matthew, too, is “crossed in the game”: “Flame and shadow seem the component parts of that lad’s soul: no daylight in it, and no sunshine, and no pure, cool moonbeam ever shone there” (168; ch. 9). Martin is the most “brilliant.” Until he is twenty “he will be vain [. . .] eager for pleasure, and desirous of admiration; athirst, too, for knowledge.” An uncouth and not handsome youngster, there is presently “a husk upon him,” but as with Hareton, “the chrysalis, will retain the power of transfiguring itself into the butterfly, and such transfiguration will, in due season, take place” (169; ch. 9): 169). Of Jessy’s future the prediction is the most dire: that irrepressibly “gay” and “passionate” child will lie dying in the spring of her life in “Rose’s guardian arms,” the “soil of [some] foreign country eventually “giving [her] a grave” (168; ch. 9), while Rose, far from England and alone, will realize Caroline’s dream and Shirley’s demand of living the freer, more worldly, and independent existence of a man. In the seer’s “magic mirror,” we see her actualizing Caroline’s vision of the “solitary shores” of a remote Nordic landscape (248; ch. 13), and Shirley’s vision of the “bereaved” orphan Eva, wandering alone in the primordial “forest valley” (455-56; ch. 27). “Now,” the narrator tells us, “behold Rose two years later”:

remote must be the shores which wear that luxuriant aspect.

This is some virgin solitude: unknown birds flutter round the

skirts of that forest; no European river this, on whose banks Rose

sits thinking. The little, quiet Yorkshire girl is a lonely emigrant in some region of the southern hemisphere. Will she ever come back?
(168; ch. 9)

Finally It should be said that Shirley Keeldar's cousin, Henry Sympson, is related in a symbolic sense to Caroline Helstone, Louis Moore, and the progeny of the Yorkes as well. He, too, differs from his conventional family, and he, too, has a precarious future. Because his mind is "older and stronger" than his crippled frame, Shirley prophesies that if he lives, he "will be an author -- perhaps, a poet" (438; ch. 26).

Like the ghosts of Heathcliff and Catherine wandering the moors, the members of this second generation seem already like spirits who have been robbed of the promise of youth. The prophesies of the seer add a tragic dimension to their characters to be sure, but in telling us about their future lives, Brontë is saying something also about the future itself. In *Wuthering Heights*, young Catherine and Hareton are the assimilated inheritors of both the primal and overly civilized natures of their parents, Catherine and Linton Earnshaw. Informed by the word and by nature, they have become integrated beings who will continue on and prosper in the civilized world. This is not so in Charlotte Brontë's novel, where that vision of the future is reflected in reverse and has darker portent. *Shirley* ends on a promising note, but for the one understated qualifier -- a condition of uncertainty always present in the conclusions of Brontë's novels -- that despite the resolution of their conflicts and their ultimate marriages,

the natural world, so precious to Shirley and Caroline, will be blighted forever by the success of the mill and the rise of industry. In this novel, unlike *Wuthering Heights*, their spiritual successors will carry the unrealized seeds of their vision, but will tragically pay the price either of death, like Jessy, inevitable suffering, like Henry, isolation, like Rose, or rage and joylessness, like Mark and Matthew. In looking for the “moral,” Brontë, as is typical, gives no directions. But the “judicious reader” may speculate that with these second-generation characters, she seems to be saying that originality and commitment, poetry and nature, cannot survive the age to come. Instead we are told that Robert Moore, the converted Coriolanus, emerges the winner; his “prophecies” are “partially, at least, fulfilled” (599; ch. 37). “The Hollow, which tradition says was once green, and lone, and wild” is replaced by the smoking chimneys of the “mighty mill” while the fairies seen in Fieldhead Hollow were the “last fairish that ever was seen on this countryside” [. . .]. A lonesome spot it was – and a bonnie spot – full of oak trees and nut trees. It is altered now” (599; ch. 37).

As tenuous as the prediction for Henry Sympson and Martin Yorke may be – “life may or may not be brief for [them] but it will certainly be brilliant” (170; ch. 9) – their characters carry the only remaining hope that Shelley’s and Brontë’s vision of “the beautiful and the true,” which they name poetry, will in fact survive.

Notes

¹ I agree with Margaret Doody's statement in *The True Story of the Novel* that "the novelists of the nineteenth century (as distinct from their critics) were in touch with the entire tradition of fiction, and their deeper roots tapped into the great stream, even if that was running underground. There is," she goes on to say, "hardly any great 'master' of fiction in the nineteenth century who does not register some impatience with the demands of absolute Realism -- not at realism itself, but at the idea that it must be all-in-all." Doody's view, however, that "most nineteenth century authors give themselves a holiday from Prescriptive Realism from time to time" (296) is quite different from the view I take that the essential structure of many Victorian novels, including those of Charlotte Bronte, are allegorical.

² By "modern" I mean the Victorian period, defined by William Houghton in his study of *The Victorian Frame of Mind* as "an era of change from the past to the future." Indeed, in England, Houghton says, "that idea and the Victorian period begin together," noting, further, John Stuart Mill's belief in 1831 that "transition [was] the leading characteristic of the time." The following quote from Mills refers precisely to the vacuum left by the break in medieval tradition: "mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones" (1).

³ John MacQueen uses the term "situations" to mean "the allegorical force of [. . .] four instances of typology [. . .] --the Song of Solomon, Ishmael and Isaac, Jonah and the Whale, the Serpent in the Wilderness. [These depend] not so much on a story, a narrative, as a situation: mutual love, the difference in birth which separated the half brothers; the plight of Jonah rather than the circumstances which brought him into that plight; the miraculous healing of the Israelites by an image of the serpent which had poisoned them" (23).

⁴Houghton refers to the "sad contemplation of withering faith and unprecedented fear of encroaching materialism" in Arnold's verse and "the paralysis of doubt that is said to have gripped Arnold's generation" (11). He lists many of the prevailing questions of the time: "is there a God or is there not, and if so, is he a person or an impersonal force? Is there a heaven and a hell? or a heaven but no hell? or neither? If there is a true religion, is it Theism or Christianity? And what is Christianity? [. . .] Similar questions," Houghton observes, "invaded ethical theory and the conception of man: have we free will or are we human automata? and if we have the power of moral choice, what is its basis? a God-given voice of conscience? or rational calculation deciding which of two actions will promote the

greatest happiness of the number? Is man a man or simply a higher ape?" Houghton paints a large brush stroke of doubt over the entire age: "the habit of doubt," he says, "was unconsciously bred. One had an uneasy feeling, perhaps only half-conscious, that his beliefs were no longer secure" (11-12).

⁵ These words suggest that allegory means symbolic representation, that, in fact, it could also mean a subjective state.

⁶ De Man's stalwart attack upon symbol in the name of allegory is a climactic moment in the theoretical turnaround against the long and impressive development of organic poetics from the late eighteenth century through the New Criticism. "After so long a period during which allegory was shunted aside as an unpoetic impostor while the symbol was held aloft in unchallenged glory, allegory began to have its good name established as critics arose, beginning in the late 1950s, to push the New Criticism, and almost two centuries of organic theorizing behind it, from its position of dominance. After early signs of the reversal in Edwin Honig's *Dark Conceit: The Making of Allegory* and the development of it in Angus Fletcher's monumental volume, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*, it was in de Man's "The Rhetoric of Temporality" that the theoretical consequences of the resurrection of allegory and the casting out of the symbol marked out and grounded the theoretical revolution that had taken place" (Krieger 13, 14).

⁷ As noted in the opening paragraph of this introduction, Felicia Bonaparte makes this case for the mythopoeic enterprise of Victorian fiction in her soon to be published study, *The Aesthetics of Poesis: The Making of Victorian Fiction*.

⁸ John is referred to in the text and here interchangeably as John Bretton, Graham, and Dr. John

⁹ As a youngster Paulina is most often called Polly.

¹⁰ From Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach."

¹¹ Making the point that Brontë's writing method's resembles Lucy Snowe's, Sue Lonoff quotes her response to the accusation that Paul wrote the essay and signed her name to it: "when M. Paul dictated the trait on which the essay was to turn, I heard it for the first time; the matter was new to me, and I had no material for its treatment. But I got books, read up the facts, laboriously constructed a skeleton out of the dry bones of the real, and then clothed them, and tried to breathe into them life, and in this last aim I had pleasure." "To what extent," Lonoff asks, "do Lucy's methods imitate Charlotte's?" She answers, "pretty closely," and I would add that both the real and the fictional author are thinking allegorically.

¹² At the end of the Peloponnesian War, the victorious Spartan general forces an Athenian poet to sing an elegy before his captors. He sings in the hope of saving his “unhappy homeland,” but at the end of the song he realizes that his audience has been asleep.

¹³ By 1853, when this novel was written, Charlotte Brontë had lost every member of her family, but her father.

¹⁴ Again, a metaphysical bond between Charlotte Brontë and Emily Dickinson is apparent. Sharing a common culture, religion, gender and, to some extent, personal experience, two poets, barely separated by place and time, but not at all by imagination and language, speak of the written word as their primary medium and as a sacred form: for Brontë, “better utterance than faltering lips can achieve” (21, 307), and for Dickinson, “the Ultimate of Talk” (407). That they do so is not uncommon, especially in the nineteenth century; however, the linguistic echoes between them suggest that approximately one decade after the publication of Brontë’s novel, Dickinson reflects on language in much the same way and for the same purpose, to create the spirit, texture, and form of myth in a modern work. The consecrated temple Brontë speaks of is “a dwelling [. . .] too wide for walls, too high for dome – a temple whose floors are space [. . .]” (308); and for Dickinson, a “House” of “Possibility” –

Of Chambers as the Cedars -
Impregnable of Eye -
And for an Everlasting roof
The Gambrels of the Sky - (657)

¹⁵ Charlotte Brontë’s view of the conspiratorial nature of Catholicism, developed more fully in the chapter entitled “Malevola,” is generally important but not relevant to his discussion. Two members of what Brontë calls the “secret junta,” Madame Walravens and Madme Beck, are essentially controlled by its third member, Père Silas, who is hoping to inherit Madame Walraven’s money “for the sake of religion and the Church, whereof Magloire Walravens was a devout daughter.” (559; ch. 39). Père Silas, who had “trained” and “taught” Paul Emanuel, “bound [him] to him by the ties of gratitude, habit, and belief.” “My pupil, ‘said Père Silas,’ if he remains in Europe, runs risk of apostasy, for he has become entangled with a heretic,” (560; ch. 39), by whom he means Lucy Snowe.

¹⁶ “Since irony . . . involves an otherness of meaning,” Angus Fletcher says, “I think we might call ironies . . . ‘condensed allegories’” (230).

¹⁷ In subsequent chapters, I refer to Fletcher’s definition of allegorical projection.

¹⁸ It must be noted, also that her father, Patrick Brontë, was removed from the domestic and creative events of family life. Throughout the children's lives he remained a remote figure, living apart in the bedroom upstairs, and it is perhaps because he physically and psychologically abandoned them that they clung to one another so intensely. Nevertheless, he was a man of strong religious belief, active intellect, political passion, and fierce stoicism, all of which had a powerful effect on Charlotte's emotional, intellectual, and imaginative life. One could argue, as many have, that Paul Emanuel's character is based on Patrick Brontë, who was very much the patriarchal godhead in the family. (Gaskell, Chapter III)

¹⁹ Brontë wrote the preface after the novel's completion and after the novel had been refused by her publisher for the second time.

²⁰ According to Glen, many features of Charlotte Brontë's narrative may be paralleled in the writing of the *Self-Help* tradition beginning in 1829 with the publication of George Lillie Craik's *the Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties* – “a compendium of biographies of scientists, scholars, engineers, and inventors, intended to serve as models for those without birth or connections who wished to make their way in the world” – and “reach[ing] its peak” in 1859 “with the publication of the phenomenally best-selling *Self Help* by [. . .] Samuel Smiles. [. . .] The lectures that formed the basis of that classic were first delivered to a young men's mutual improvement society in Leeds in 1845 – the year in which, very probably, Charlotte Brontë began to write this novel. [. . .] The commitment to sober realism announced in her preface reads like a description of [the *Self Help*] subject matter: ‘the ordinary business and pursuits of common life [. . .] examples of conduct and character drawn from reading, observation, and experience. Like the heroes of Craik and Smiles [. . .], her Crimsworth succeeds not because of birth or good fortune but despite handicaps, and through his own unaided efforts. The values he invokes are the classic values of the *Self Help* tradition – industry and perseverance, self reliance and independence, self respect and self control. And his story – the story of a young man who must make his way in the world, who labours first as a clerk and then as a school master, who works his way up until he owns his own school, and in the process makes a suitable marriage (rejecting a less prudent sexual adventure) – seems to be one in which those virtues are demonstrated and vindicated” (10-11).

²¹ In a letter dated 2 March 1849 to William Smith William, Charlotte writes in answer to his objections about the first chapter of *Shirley*: “At present I feel reluctant to withdraw it – because as I formerly said of the Lowood-part of *Jane Eyre* – it is true.” What she says about “the curates and their ongoing” is by implication true of Lowood as well; “they are merely photographed from the life [. . .].”

²² *Paradise Lost* I, II. 6-7

²³ From a realistic perspective the novel, of course, fits the definition of a *bildungsroman*, but that term alone does not address the novel's allegorical narrative.

²⁴ Letter to William Smith Williams; 12 April 1850

²⁵ 2nd edition of *Jane Eyre*

²⁶ Written earlier than *Villette*, and, as Brontë makes clear, a great influence on her own vision, *Vanity Fair*, according to Felicia Bonaparte, is an allegorical study of genre. Thackeray begins the novel by waving goodbye to the fixed and coherent world of epic and spiritual romance, and by locating his own narrative in the post-heroic, post-religious world of *Vanity Fair*. In representing Amelia Sedley as the sentimental lady of conventional romance, and Dobbin as the foolish knight of chivalric romance, he at once recreates and disintegrates traditional generic types in order to mark them obsolete in the fallen world; and in characterizing Beckett Sharpe as the actress, "artful" story-teller, and verbal satirist, he distinguishes, and to some extent defines, the only forms possible in a world ruled by secular and material concerns.

²⁷ Daniel interprets the king's dream of the colossal statue in chapter 2.

²⁸ Daniel reads the handwriting on the wall in chapter 5.

²⁹ Crenshaw on Jonah: "Jonah's resistance to the divine call exceeds the usual reluctance, exemplified by Moses, Amos, and Jeremiah. Jonah actually flees from God, and after the deity has shown him the futility of his ways he carries out the task with a vengeance. Then he resents the sparing of repentant Ninevites and argues that justice ought to prevail, although he has experienced undeserved compassion. This picture of Israelite prophecy is not flattering, for Jonah is unrepentant to the end. When he does resort to prayer Jonah exalts the ego and uses the occasion to accuse God" (380).

³⁰ In *Words With Power*, Frye refers to *On The Sublime*, a treatise by Longinus dealing with passages which become revelatory because they stand out from the context in which they are written. (111)

³¹ There was interest in alchemy in the nineteenth century. William Blake, Mary Shelley, and Bulwer Lytton use alchemical principles as a metaphor for spiritual transformation.

³² Rabbinic commentary “[builds] the relation between Naomi and Ruth into a paradigm for [Naomi’s] education of [the] proselyte” Ruth. (*Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 664)

³³ From *Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin: “God’s Preservation and Support of t he Word by His Power, and His Government of Every Part of It by His Providence.” Translated by John Allen (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian Board of Christian Educators, 1930)

³⁴ Mark 8: 34

³⁵ Matthew 4: 4

³⁶ John 8:36

³⁷ Sermon on the mount

³⁸ As Michael Mason notes, “directly contrary to the sermon on the mount.”

³⁹ Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution: 1603-1714*: “Among the causes of the Civil War we must include the character of Charles I. Much stupider than his father or his eldest son, Charles was governed first by the disastrously vain and incompetent Buckingham, and then by the disastrously popish and arbitrary Henrietta Maria. He never gave his full confidence to the men who served him best, Laud and Stratford. His readiness to permit the Laudian party to dominate the Church of England [. . .] was politically disastrous.” (61)

⁴⁰ This is the view taken by Jean Rhys’ novel, *Wilde Sargasso Sea* (1966).

⁴¹ This idea fits in with Ralph Tymms’ point that the allegorical may be camouflaged by a finely-tuned psychological depiction.

⁴² The night before her wedding Jane re-experiences her confusion between dream and reality. Her emotions herald what is to come: “I cannot see my prospects clearly to-night, sir; and I hardly know what thought I have in my head. Everything in life seems unreal.” Rochester answers, “Except me: I am substantial enough: – touch me.” She replies, “You sir, are the most phantom-like of all: you are a mere dream” (II: 312).

⁴³ On the one hand the desert or the wilderness “is a place for spiritual renewal: Hagar (Gen. 16.7; 21.19), Moses (Exod. 3.1-4.17), and Elijah (I Kings 19) flee there and meet God” (*The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. “Jesus, when he had overcome temptation, had angels to minister to him in the desert (Mark I: 13)” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 286); on the other hand, the desert is used in

Scripture “as the symbol of temptation [. . .] and persecution. [. . .] the desert was supposed to be inhabited by evil spirits” (Deute. 8.15; Isa. 13.21; 34.14) (Unger). “It is a place of hunger, thirst, and deprivation (Ps. 207.4-5; Job 30.3)” (Oxford).

⁴⁴ “Since the wilderness is made for revelation, it favours the endeavors of false as strongly as that of true prophets” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 286).

⁴⁵ I am speaking here of similarity, a word implying relationship and difference, not, as in allegory, a one-to-one connection between agent and idea.

⁴⁶ The novel takes place between 1811 and 1812, thirty-seven years before she wrote the novel.

⁴⁷ The “Orders in Council,” drawn up by the British government in response to Napoleon’s threat of economic warfare, are one source of that contention, their imposition of taxation on trade with Europe threatening mercantile interests in Britain and dissolving the balance of trade abroad. These “Orders” and more permanent defining changes continue to destabilize Brontë’s own time and place.

⁴⁸ In an autobiographical reading, this statement might suggest Brontë’s commitment to the *Juvenilia*, which, as Andrew and Judith Hook point out in the introduction to the novel, “until she was over twenty years old [. . .] absorbed her far more than the actual world in which it was essential she learn to make her way” (13).

⁴⁹ Juliet Barker: *The Brontës: A Life in Letters*. This comment taken from the *Daily News*, 31, October 1849.

⁵⁰ She uses this phrase in her letter of May 12, 1848 to William Smith Williams

⁵¹ Andrew and Judith Hook in the introduction to *Shirley*: “Charlotte Brontë simply takes phrases and whole sentences from Miss Rigby and puts them in the mouth of Mrs. and Miss Hardman” (613).

⁵² Mr. Brontë’s response to the poor worker is reflected in the response of Caroline Helstone, Shirley Keeldar, Robert Moore, and Mr. Hall: “[. . .] during his residence at Haworth, there was a strike; the hands in the neighbourhood felt themselves aggrieved by the masters, and refused to work; Mr. Brontë thought that they had been unjustly and unfairly treated, and he assisted them by all the means in his power to ‘keep the wolf from their doors,’ and avoid the incubus of debt. Several of the more influential inhabitants of Haworth and the

neighbourhood were mill-owners; they remonstrated pretty sharply with him, but he believed that his conduct was right, and persevered in it" (Gaskell, 90).

Selected Bibliography

Works by Charlotte Bronte

- Bronte, Charlotte, *Legends of Angria*. Compiled by Fannie E. Ratchford and William Clyde De Vane. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933.
- . *The Professor*. Ed. Heather Glen. Penguin Group, 1989.
- . *Jane Eyre*. Ed. Michael Mason. Penguin Group, 1996.
- . *Shirley*. Eds. Andrew and Judith Hook. London: Penguin English Library, 1979.
- . *Villette*. Ed. Mark Lilly. London: Penguin English Library, 1979.
- . *The Poems of Charlotte Bronte*. Ed. Victor A. Neufeldt. New York: Garland Publishing, 1985.

Other Works

- Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 5th ed. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 1988.
- Armstrong, Karen. *History of God*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.
- Balakian, Anna. *The Symbolist Movement: A Critical Appraisal*. New York University Press, 1977.
- Barker, Juliet. *The Brontës: A Life in Letters*. Woodstock, New York: The Overlook Press, 1998.
- Bonaparte, Felicia. *The Triptych and the Cross: The Central Myths of George Eliot's Poetic Imagination*. New York University Press, 1979.
- . "Middelmarch: The Genesis of Myth in the English Novel: The Relationship between Literary Form and the Modern Predicament." *Religion and Literature* 13:3 (1981) 107-54.
- Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture*. London: Frank Cass and Co Ltd, 1951.

- Bulwer-Lytton, Edward. "On Certain Principles of Art in Works of Imagination." *Caxtoniana: A Series of Essays on Life, Literature, and Manners*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864.
- Burkhart, Charles. *Charlotte Brontë: A Psychosexual Study of her Novels*. London: Gollancz, 1973.
- Butler, Judith. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Carlisle, Janice. "The Face in the Mirror: *Villette* and the Conventions of Autobiography." *English Literary History* 46 (1979).
- Carlyle, Thomas. *Sartor Resartus*. Eds. Kerry McSweeney and Peter Sabor. Oxford University Press, 1987.
- . *Heroes Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*. New York: F. A. Stokes, 1888.
- Christensen, Alan Conrad. *Edward Bulwer-Lytton: The Fiction of New Regions*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1976.
- Colby, Robert A. "Villette and the Life of the Mind." *PMLA* LXXV (1960).
- Cooke, Michael G. "Byron and the Romantic Life." Reprinted in *Byron's Poetry*. Ed. Frank D. McConnell. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978.
- Crenshaw, James L. "Jonah." *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. Eds. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Curran, Stuart. *Poetic Form and British Romanticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- De Rougemont, Denis. *Dictionary of the History of Ideas Vol III*. New York: 1973.
- Dessner, Lawrence J. "Charlotte Brontë's 'Le Nid,' an Unpublished Manuscript." *Transactions of the Brontë Society* 16 (1973).
- De Voragine. Jacobus. *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints Vol. I*. Translated by William Granger Ryan. Princeton University Press, 1993.

- Dickens, Charles. *David Copperfield*. Ed. Trevor Blount. Penguin Group, 1966.
- . *Bleak House*. Eds. George Ford and Sylèvre Monod. New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1977.
- Diel, Paul. *Symbolism in the Bible: The Universality of Symbolic Language and its Psychological Significance*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986.
- Doody, Margaret Anne. *The True Story of the Novel*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996.
- Dreyfus, Hubert L. and Rabinow, Paul. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës*. London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1975.
- . *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- Eliade, Mircea. *A History of Religious Ideas Vol. I*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- . *The Sacred & Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovic, 1959.
- Fleishman, Avrom. *Figures of Autobiography: The Language of Self-Writing in Victorian and Modern England*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.
- Fletcher, Angus. *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*. Ithaca New York: Cornell University Press, 1970.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power*. Ed. James D. Faubion. Translated by Robert Hurley and Others. *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 Vol. Three*. The New York Press, 1994.
- . *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage/Random House, 1980.
- . *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage/Random House, 1979.

- Frye, Northrope. *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovic, 1981.
- . *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- . *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of The Bible and Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. London: J. M. Dent, 1960.
- Gibbs, A. C. (Ed.). *Middle English Romances*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966.
- Gilbert, Susan M. and Gubar, Susan. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
- Girard, René. *Violence and the Sacred*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1979.
- Gunn, David M. "David." *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*. Eds. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Homans, Margaret. *Bearing the Word: Language and Female Experience in Nineteenth Century Women's Writing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- Honig, Edwin. *Dark Conceit: The Making of Allegory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Houghton, Walter E. *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Jackson, W. T. H. *The Literature of the Middle Ages*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.
- Jacobus, Mary. *Reading Woman: Essays in Feminist Criticism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Janson, H. W. *History of Art*, 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey and New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1977.

- Jeffrey, David Lyle. Ed. "Vashti." *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992.
- Krieger, Murray. "A Waking Dream: The Symbolic Alternative to Allegory." *Allegory, Myth, and Symbol*. *Harvard English Studies* 9 (1981).
- Langford, Thomas A. "Prophetic Imagination and the Unity of Jane Eyre." *Studies in the Novel* 6 (1974).
- Lonoff, Sue, ed. and translator. *The Belgian Essays: A Critical Edition*. New Haven And London: Yale University Press, 1996.
- MacQueen, John. *Allegory: The Critical Idiom*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1970.
- Mason, Michael. *Jane Eyre: Introduction*. London: Penguin Books, 1996.
- McGee, C. E. "Performance Criticism." Ed. Irena R. Makaryk. *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory*. University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- Meyer, Susan. "Colonialism and the Figurative Strategy." *New Casebooks*. Ed. Heather Glen. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Miller, J. Hillis. "The Two Allegories." *Allegory, Myth and Symbol*. *Harvard English Studies* 9, (1981)
- Millgate, Jane. "Narrative Distance in Jane Eyre: The Relevance of the Pictures." *Modern Language Review*, 1968.
- Milton, John. *The Complete Poetry of John Milton*. Ed. John T. Shawcross. Garden City and New York: Doubleday 1971.
- Moglen, Helene. *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1976.
- Peers, E. Allison, Ed. and Translator. *The Life of Teresa of Jesus: The Autobiography of Teresa of Ávila*. New York: Doubleday, 1960.
- Portal, Frédérick. *Des couleurs symboliques dans l'Antiquité, le Moyen Age et les temps Modernes*, Paris, 1837. Eds. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant. Translated by. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. *Dictionary of Symbols* England: Penguin, 1996.

- Qualls, Barry. *The Secular Pilgrims of Victorian Fiction: The Novel as Book of Life*. Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Sayre, Henry. "Performance." *Critical Terms of Literary Study*. Eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas Mclaughlin. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*. Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Skura, Meredith Ann. *The Literary Uses of the Psychoanalytic Process*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Slochower, Harry. *Mythopoesis: Mythic Patterns in the Literary Classics*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970.
- Smith, Macklin. *Prudentius' Psychomachia: A Reexamination*. Princeton University Press, 1976.
- Stone, Donald. *The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.
- Taylor, Irene. *Holy Ghosts: The Male Muses of Emily and Charlotte Brontë*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Tillyard, E. M. W. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1943.
- Traversi, D. A. *An Approach to Shakespeare Vol II*. New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1969.
- Unger Merrill F. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*. Ed. R. K. Harrison. Chicago: Moody Press, 1957.
- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957.
- Wilson, A. N. *Paul*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997.